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Ballet

TODAY





A rehearsal picture of four of the dancers in Frederick Ashton's *La Valse* danced before the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret at the Royal Opera House at the Gala Performance in aid of the Royal Ballet Benevolent Fund on Tuesday, 10th March, 1959. The costumes were designed by the French couturier André Levasseur (who was one time connected with Dior). The dancers seen in this photograph are (nearest camera) Deirdre Dixon, (left to right) Jacqueline Daryl, Patricia Thorogood and Christine Beckley.

Ballet

TODAY

EDITOR'S LOG

Established

1946

SEND-OFF

In *Editor's Log* last month I wrote of the invitation I had received, in common with other members of the press, to attend at Dame Margot Fonteyn's home to meet Royal Academy Examiners soon to leave Britain to conduct examinations in far flung corners of the Empire and many other countries.

The outside of Dame Margot's house has an old-world charm, preserved because it lies well back from the road and is approached through a small cul-de-sac where the noise of the traffic becomes hushed, and it is difficult to believe that you are within a stone's throw of one of the busiest thoroughfares of London.

Inside, the great masses of flowers arranged on wrought-iron tables could well be some of the beautiful bouquets which the ballerina receives whenever she dances, but the simplicity of the little bowls of anemones ranged at intervals along the mantelpiece made me think that these had been bought and arranged by our hostess herself.

We were received by Dame Margot and Sir Gerald Creasy, Chairman of the R.A.D. Overseas Committee, in the long columned dining room with its deep green walls and carpet, long windows curtained in green

shantung and rich red velvet, overlooking a small but delightful garden.

I wish that some of the fifty thousand candidates examined annually by the R.A.D. could have been with us in that room and heard Dame Margot so earnestly and sincerely discussing their needs and giving a send-off to the examiners who would soon be on their way. It must have been a great day for the examiners: Miss Joy Bury leaving for Kenya, to spend four days in Nairobi, followed by a tour of the Union of South Africa (Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban, Port Shepstone, Ladysmith, Pretoria, Springs, Brakpan, Benoni, Krugersdorp, Beron, Pietermaritzburg, Gormiston) where it is estimated 250 candidates will be entered, and on her way back call in at Malta to examine another 70 candidates.

We were also introduced to Miss Rita Ireland, who will be examining in Trinidad for two weeks, go on to Nassau to teach (the first visit of an R.A.D. examiner to this city)—Oakland, California, Long Beach, Mexico City, and Kingston, Jamaica (estimated entries 700) and to Miss Kathleen Oliver and Miss Dorothy Conibear—Australia bound to visit Canberra, Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Wagga Wagga, Goulburn,

Queanbeyan, Tasmania, Wollongong, Townsville, Newcastle, Orange, Lithgow, Valley, Toowoomba, Murwillumbah, Nambour, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Mackay, Ingham, Cairns, Charters Towers, Ayr, Gladstone, etc., where it is estimated 8,000 candidates will be examined, and finally Miss Margaret Robinson making her first visit overseas for the Academy to travel to Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya (Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Penang) and is expected to examine 750 candidates.

I also wish some of the teachers from the cities soon to be visited by these Examiners could have heard Dame Margot extolling their praises: "these teachers are very sincere and hard working, but it is very difficult for some of them in these outlying towns to know if what they teach is up to date. Many of them come to England, which is a great expense for them, but for those who cannot do this the visit of an Examiner enables them to check their work and keep in touch with English ballet, and," she added, with a mischievous glance at the journalists present, "English ballet has some standing in the world today."

Dame Margot explained that not all the candidates for examination would emerge as

—Continued overleaf

No. 3

VOL. 12

In This Issue

Editor's Log	3	Venice by Robert Paterson	20
Fonteyn and Sones in Japan by John Haylock	5	Holland by Janet Sinclair	20
London Reviews by Fernau Hall	6	Egypt by Walens	20
New Recordings by Bedford Crowle	8	New York by Walter Sorell	21
New Books by Pigeon Crowle	8	Chicago by George Jackson	21
They danced for Macmillan by Roy MacGregor-Hastie	9	Undine in Munich	22
Careers in Pictures Dulce Anaya	11	Nutcracker in Stuttgart	23
Backstage	14	Both by Dr. Wilfried Hofmann	
Men in Ballet Norman Dixon	16	Television Ballet by Helen Ross	24
		Programmes for the Month	25
NEWS FROM THE WORLD			
New Zealand by Keith Woods	18	Young Dancer's Page by Fernau Hall	26

Cover Portrait
H.R.H. Princess Margaret backstage
at Covent Garden after the Gala
performance.



Our next issue will be published on 30th April

EDITOR'S LOG (continued)

professional dancers, only a few would do so, but apart from the fact that care must be taken that these few should learn nothing that would have to be unlearned if they made ballet their career, ballet in itself helped to enrich the life of any child.

Just before we left, Dame Margot announced that the Gala Performance given in November in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen Mother, H.R.H. Princess Margaret and attended by Princess Anne had resulted in a profit of £5,500.

This Gala was organised to help the funds of the Royal Academy of Dancing and one of the people who put such a lot of hard work into it was Dame Margot herself. The ballerina was not satisfied to sit on committees and *talk* she went out personally to sell advertising space in the Gala Souvenir programme, and, I am told, did this so enthusiastically that she oversold by a page.

She also offered the hospitality of her home to dancers coming from abroad to participate in the Gala. These are some of the things we were not told, we only find them out by accident.

RECEPTION

The next day I was to meet Dame Margot again, this time at a reception given by the Directors of the Royal Opera House and the Arthur Rank Organisation to mark the completion of the filming of "The Royal Ballet." It was interesting to see Dame Margot in this new setting. Of course she is fêted wherever she goes, but the film company were giving her the full "film-star treatment." To us she is the star of the Royal Ballet, to them she is a star with a big name in her own right throughout the world. Watching her, the thought went through my mind that surely this has been the best year ever for the ballerina. Today we do not drink champagne out of celebrities slippers, nor do they become the "toast of London, Paris, or New York," but we have our own way of showing that the world is literally at their feet. Dame Margot is a brilliant success both in her private life and in her work; throughout the world people long to see her dance. What more can there be to offer?

TELEVISION RECEPTION

When leading stars from Scandinavia arrived in London during February, to appear on Granada's TV Programme "Chelsea at Nine" a number of journalists were invited to meet them at the Dorchester Hotel. Amongst the artists were Erik Bruhn, Kirsten Simone and Lizzie Rode from the Royal Danish Ballet. What do dancers do in their spare time? The ballerinas told me that during their short stay they were only able to take in *two* theatres: they went to see Margot Fonteyn in *Ondine* at Covent Garden, and Jerome Robbins' *West Side Story* at Her Majesty's Theatre. They were enthusiastic about both.

I am told that Mr. Sidney Bernstein, boss of Granada TV Network, is a great balletomane. This could account for the great number of interesting dance items and international stars appearing so frequently on this excellent programme.

RETURN

Beryl Grey officially returned to the fold at Covent Garden at a press reception held on 25th February when she introduced us to Caj Selling of the Royal Swedish Ballet, who is to partner her in the full-length ballets she will dance during her five-week

season as guest artist with the Royal Ballet. Asked whether the implications made by newspapers at the time of her resignation that there were disagreements between her and the Royal Ballet were true, Miss Grey refused to be drawn, saying that a statement had been issued at the time and she had nothing further to add to that.

Mr. Selling partnered Beryl Grey when she was a guest artist at the Royal Opera, Stockholm, in December last year, and although this is his first appearance in London, he appeared with the Royal Swedish Ballet during the 1957 Edinburgh Festival.

When Miss Grey's season ends at Covent Garden she is to make a tour on the Continent and her first appearance will be in Brussels.

NO SECRETS

I went along to a press conference at the Sadler's Wells Theatre and although the information given was mainly about opera and I shall not therefore report it here, I must say that the efficiency with which Mr. Norman Tucker and Mr. Stephen Arlen conducted the proceedings greatly impressed me. It has always been one of my pet grumbles that one has to *fight* for information from some of the ballet companies; one would think that they wanted to keep their plans secret. Two days after you go to press they come along with some vital piece of news that they must have had in their pockets, which is maddening to say the least of it. But at Sadler's Wells no one could complain that every facility was not given to press representatives to know what the Company is doing, when and why. In fact Mr. Stephen Arlen, Administrative Director complained to me afterwards that no one had *asked* him for percentages on the theatre, which he had carefully prepared. "In fact" he said, "we try to think up any awkward questions the journalists might ask us and have the answer ready."

The programme includes several items of interest to balletomanes. Tamara Toumanova's Season commences mid-April; Ballet Rambert is to have a London season commencing 25th May (soon after that they will of course be off to America); Susana and José are to make a return visit and their repertoire will include a new ballet entitled *Carmen*, and Maurice Béjart will appear with his Company, the Ballet Théâtre de Paris in *Orphée*, *Equilibre* and *Theme and Variations*.

The production and choreography for *Die Fledermaus* which the Sadler's Wells Opera will present at the London Coliseum on April 16th will be by Wendy Toye.

BALLET EXHIBITION

The Ballet Exhibition organised by Mr. George Hall last summer, was so well attended that much more ambitious plans have been made for 1959. The Exhibition will again be held at the Army and Navy Stores, Victoria Street, London, and will occupy the 8,000 square-foot circular room and galleries from July 30th to August 21st. Features will include a display of decor and costume designs by leading designers in the United Kingdom, fifteen panels of honour indicating the contribution of Britain's fifteen most notable ballet personalities in the past half century, a special "album" of several hundred photographs loaned by the principal dancers of the day, displays representing the work of all the companies now producing ballet in this country, and a

Salon of Fine Art, Sculpture and Photography, at which awards for the best in each section will be made by a jury of experts.

Artists, sculptors and photographers are invited to submit their works to The Director, The Ballet Exhibition 1959, 19 Cliveden Place, London, S.W.1. Intending exhibitors should first write in advance for an application form, and all exhibits must be in by May 13th, 1959. These will be seen by a hanging committee, who will decide which will be displayed at the exhibition. Those hung will be judged by a jury, who will award certificates of merit.

Mr. Anton Dolin has agreed to be President of the Exhibition, which is receiving the support of many famous people in ballet, Dame Ninette de Valois, Dr. Julian Braunschweig, Marie Rambert, C.B.E., Dame Adeline Genée, Alicia Markova, C.B.E., Beryl Grey, Irina Baronova, Phyllis Bedells, Grace Cone, Tamara Karsavina, and many well-known patrons of the arts.

NEWS HERE AND THERE

Milorad Miskovitch and his Company are again to make an extensive tour of Germany in April, he then leaves for Japan in May to dance *Les Algues* with Janine Charrat, and later returns to Paris to do a new ballet.

Jeffrey Kovel and his wife Estella Nova left Festival Ballet after the Company's week in Liverpool. They have signed a contract to dance with the Borovansky Ballet in Australia when their next season commences, which is expected to be in October in Melbourne. In the meantime they will be dancing in the Australian production of the musical *Grab me a Gondola* which is to have its première in Sydney on May 2nd. This musical, which had such a successful London run, will be on a much larger scale in Australia, and several numbers have been specially choreographed for Jeffrey and Estella. Jeffrey Kovel tells me that David Lichine is to do four new ballets for the Borovansky.

Pilar Lopez will open at the Princes Theatre on May 11th; no further details are available at time of going to press.

OBITUARIES

Lydia Kyasht, who was born in 1885 in St. Petersburg and became first soloist at the Imperial Theatre there in 1908, died in London during January. Miss Kyasht came to England in 1908 and succeeded Adeline Genée as prima ballerina at the Empire Theatre, London. Later danced in America, and in 1919 was a ballerina with the Diaghilev Company. In 1939 she formed her own Company the Ballet de la Jeunesse, and in more recent years taught in London and elsewhere (occasionally at the Sadler's School).

The tragically early death of Gordon Hamilton in Paris during February will shock his friends and admirers in many parts of the world. He made his debut as a dancer in his native country, Australia. In England he danced with Ballet Rambert and the Sadler's Wells Ballet and in France with the Ballets des Champs Elysées 1946-47, rejoining Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris in 1949. In recent years he worked as ballet-master at the Vienna Opera and was with the Vienna State Opera Ballet when the Staatsoper, rebuilt after destruction during the war, opened in November, 1955.



Fonteyn and Some in Japan

From **JOHN HAYLOCK**, Ballet Today Correspondent in Tokyo

The names Fonteyn and Some have now become household words in Tokyo: at the butcher's shop, in trains, everywhere, everyone talks about them. The two ballets, *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, in which they appeared in late February and early March were televised and so a much larger audience than could have got into the Hibya Theatre, Tokyo, for the five performances were able to see them. They danced with the Komaki Ballet Company, the leading ballet company in Japan. Both ballets were produced by Mr. Masahide Komaki.

Mr. Komaki's production of *Swan Lake* was lavish, perhaps too lavish for the small stage; the corps de ballet was thirty strong and were rather crowded. The famous *pas de trois* in Act I was well rendered by Miss Ruriko Tachikawa, Miss Tomoji Shakuta and Mr. Naoto Seki. Miss Tachikawa and Mr. Seki (considered to be the best male dancer in Japan) were both trained by Mr. Komaki, and Miss Shakuta spent two and a half years at the Metropolitan Ballet School in New York. But the audience had come to see Dame Margot and Mr. Some who were superb: their *pas de deux* and *pas seuls* were applauded tremendously, even in the middle, and the Japanese are not a very demonstrative race. Dame Margot's Odette is, of course, well-known, but never in Tokyo had an audience seen such characterization in ballet, its breath was taken away for she becomes a swan. The dances in Act III, the Ballroom Scene, were executed with verve, in particular the Mazurka by Mr. Seki and Miss Masako Sunaga, who was trained by Mr. Komaki, and the Espagnole by Miss Toshiko Saiga, who studied in Paris under Madame Preobrajenska, and Mr. Hara and Mr. Kikuchi; but it was difficult to take one's eyes off Fonteyn when on the stage or one's mind off her when not on the stage. Mr. Komaki danced the part of Rothbart, and was a very evil-looking magician.

The costumes, all made in Tokyo, were colourful and satisfactory, except perhaps for Wolfgang, the Prince's Tutor, who looked, with his tasselled turban and flowing gown as if he had come out of some bygone Tartar kingdom.

The Fairies and the Cavaliers in The Prologue of *The Sleeping Beauty* entered well and gave a flourishing start to this ballet; Miss Saiga's Fairy of the Mountain Ash was particularly good. Mr. Komaki as Carabosse arrived impressively on the scene in a rat-drawn carriage and was dramatically diabolic. Dame Margot's Princess Aurora when she met the four rather shy Princes, who except for Mr. Yasuki Sasa's Prince of England, were a trifle bloodless, enlivened the supporting dancers as well as the audience; her four *équilibres* when greeting the Princes were perfect. Miss Ayako Ogawa, who was trained at Sadler's Wells, was an excellent Lilac Fairy; she was a little stern, but so fairies should be, for they are not of this world. By her performance she showed herself to be one of the best ballerinas in Japan; she is neat and compact and dances with a confidence that some of her colleagues lack. The dance of the Girls with the Spindles was well done by Miss Tachikawa, Miss Saiga, Miss Shakuta and Miss Tanaka; they folded up with grace when accused by the Master of Ceremonies, evincing the right amount of fear and shame. The Awakening Scene came off well. The high catafalque-like bed covered with cobwebs which disappeared when slashed by the Prince's

sword was convincing, as was the awakening itself with Miss Ogawa watching the sudden falling in love of the Prince and Princess, beautifully done by Dame Margot and Mr. Some. The *Divertissements* in Act III were good, especially the *pas de trois* of Florestan and his two Sisters, Mr. Sasa, Miss Tachikawa and Miss Shakuta, and the Bluebird and the Enchanted Princess of Mr. Seki and Miss Sunaga. Mr. Seki, though handicapped by being short-limbed and a little stocky, gets over these disadvantages by having a sureness and dexterity in his movements that are a delight to see. The Grand *Pas de Deux* by Dame Margot and Mr. Some was the greatest dancing your correspondent has seen in Tokyo, truly dancing of genius; Fonteyn's *fish-dives* were consummate.

Mr. Komaki's production was on the whole commendable. Occasionally his corps de ballet and some of the supporting dancers indicated that they could have done with more rehearsal: there was sometimes a hesitance, a feeling of uncertainty; more abandon and less restraint was required. For example in *Swan Lake* the Swans, when angry, were not vicious enough. The A.B.C. Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Mr. Wolfgang Stavonhagen played adequately but did not show much inspiration. One of the faults in the Japanese dancers, with the notable exception of Mr. Komaki, is that they are often devoid of facial expression. This probably comes from the innate Japanese custom of not showing one's feelings and presenting an impassive countenance on whatever occasion. Both Dame Margot and Mr. Some showed how indispensable expression is in dancing. The Japanese ballerinas and danseurs should have learnt a lot from Dame Margot's performances, and in particular the young dancers should have realised the importance of characterization by studying Mr. Some's portrayals of Prince Siegfried and Prince Desire, for his Princes are real and are not just dancers.

There is no doubt that this memorable visit of Britain's two leading dancers did a lot to stimulate ballet in Japan and the Komaki Company.

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LONDON

REVIEWS

by FERNAU HALL

DAVID BLAIR IN PETRUSHKA

The great Stravinsky-Fokine ballets *Petrushka* and *The Firebird* have a status in the Royal Ballet's repertoire which is very different from that which they occupied in the de Basil company's repertoire in the thirties. In those days *Petrushka* shone out as a blinding masterpiece, and was correspondingly popular, while *The Firebird* was a *succès d'estime*. Today, the reverse is true. There are several reasons for this. *The Firebird* was underestimated in the thirties because the ballerinas who danced the title role interpreted it quite wrongly, almost as if it were the same as the Swan-Queen; now Margot Fonteyn has given the central role all its original demoniacal power and so re-established the value of the ballet as a whole. But *Petrushka* at Covent Garden suffers from the fact that the dancers, lacking training in the Russian school, do not achieve quite the breadth and freedom of movement which is essential in this very Russian ballet; and above all it suffers from the absence of an interpretation of the title role comparable in quality to Margot Fonteyn's *Firebird*.

As I wrote at the time the ballet was revived at Covent Garden, a very serious mistake was made in giving the title role to Alexander Grant: this role, created for a classical dancer of genius (Nijinsky) by a choreographer of genius at the height of his creative powers, demands qualities far surpassing those of a competent character dancer. Of all the dancers in the Royal Ballet, David Blair then seemed most likely to do justice to the role, and now, at long last, he has been given a chance to tackle it.

He has clearly taken this important assignment with all the seriousness it merits, and his interpretation has a good deal of promise: already he has done much to lift the ballet into the plane of magic where it belongs. His make-up is excellent, and his facial expressions have the right quality of yearning emptiness; the role is not particularly difficult technically, but some of the turns and leaps need a good deal of control, and they are clearly well within his scope. One mood—despondency—is established very clearly. But we do not see the sudden frantic changes of mood which are so characteristic of *Petrushka*, and there is no expression yet of the violent inner conflicts which torment the puppet. (He is not only revolting against the Showman and the Blackamoor: he is struggling to escape from his puppet condition—to become a human being and win the love of the Ballerina). But the tragedy of *Petrushka* is that he *is* made of wood, and when, from time to time, David Blair gives to a movement some of the flowing quality proper to a human being, he takes away all the pathos of the role. His line is not always exactly right—the head not quite tilted enough, the angles of the body and arms not sufficiently emphasized. But it is chiefly in the timing that his interpretation falls short of perfection: *Petrushka* must move with extremely crisp rhythms, every movement dead on the beat, and when a pose is to be held it must be held with perfect stillness: no slight wandering away from it, as David Blair does from time to time.

On the other hand one must remember that almost nothing in David Blair's previous experience has given him any preparation for this supreme test. He is in the position of an actor in weekly repertory, accustomed to produce a series of highly professional sketches of conventional roles, suddenly called on to play Hamlet: with no experience even in speaking blank verse, much less in coping with the ambiguities and psychic torments of Shakespeare's most complex roles. But even our imaginary actor is likely to have *seen* Hamlet acted—whereas David Blair is unlikely to have seen any great *Petrushka*. Margot Fonteyn gained enormously from the help of Karsavina when she re-created the role of the *Firebird*, and David Blair might well profit in a corresponding way from the help of such outstanding interpreters of *Petrushka* as Massine, Woizikowski and Shabolevsky. One thing is certain: he has at last been given a role which demands all that he has of imagination, dramatic ability and creative power. This is a turning-point in his career, and the development of his interpretation of the role will be of the greatest interest. It may even have important repercussions on the development of British male dancing.

RETURN OF BERYL GREY

Beryl Grey's admirers turned out in force to welcome her back to Covent Garden as guest artist, after her two years of free-lancing around the world. Very sensibly, the decision was made to present her in *Swan Lake*, the ballet in which she had such success in Russia.

The effect of her work in Russia (where she had a good deal of coaching from the famous ballerina Semyonova) was very striking. In the past, her dancing in the classics suffered from a certain lack of feeling for tradition: whereas every detail of Margot Fonteyn's performances has always taken us back through generation upon generation of great artists, Beryl Grey's interpretations seemed at times to float in a void; her acting, in particular, was sometimes strangely naïve for an artist who shows such intelligence in her talks and articles. But it was clear on 2nd March that she had made contact with tradition, working with Semyonova and other Russian producers; her facial expressions throughout the ballets were more subtle than before, and her interpretation had more depth. For example, at the end of Act II she established very clearly (with stiff, almost automatic arm movements) that she was being pulled backward, against her will, by the power of Von Rothbart. Early in Act III she suggested the sinister quality of Odile by her crisp leg movements, but combined these with soft arm movements which suggested Odile's seductive powers and at the same time provided a link with Odette. (This was an interesting idea which might well have been developed further.) The high point of her performance was undoubtedly the variation in Act III, which stopped the show: here she used some really intelligent head movements, and sometimes moved forward with her body curving back in a streamlined arch, the movement seeming to flow smoothly from her waist up and over a backward-leaning head. In the 32 fouettés she went all out for bravura, which was probably the best thing she could do in the circumstances: this is strictly a bravura insert which has nothing to do with the rest of the ballet.

What she could not learn about in Moscow was poetic treatment of hands: this is something which belongs specially to Leningrad, and Ulanova embodies this aspect of the "Petersburg School" much better than Semyonova. With her long arms and legs Beryl Grey is capable of projecting her line very vividly, and to make the best of it she now needs to study "Petersburg" hands.

She was partnered by Caj Selling, a tall, handsome young Swedish dancer who made a fine impression when he danced in *Grand Pas Classique Hongrois* as presented by the Royal Swedish Ballet at the Edinburgh Festival in 1957. Since then he has made splendid progress, and is now an outstanding artist whose visit to Covent Garden is greatly to be welcomed. He has a typical contemporary Scandinavian style, i.e. the Bournonville tradition as broadened and modernized by a teacher from outside (Vera Volkova in Denmark, Mary Skeaping in Sweden). His elevation and beats are excellent, and he mimes with quite breathtaking spontaneity and conviction: to him the conventional gestures are clearly as natural as speaking. But his turns are still a little slow, and his partnering on March 2 was at times inadequate: it looked as if he and Beryl Grey had not received the long and careful production which is so characteristic of ballet in Russia. There the maître de ballet (producer) is someone of outstanding quality, to whom great respect is given: this is an essential part of ballet tradition which is sadly neglected at Covent Garden—where there have been some fine producers since 1946, but never for long.

Lack of production was very clear in Beryl Grey's dancing in *Checkmate* two days later. The role of the Black Queen suits her in some ways better than any other (even though anyone with memories of June Brae might find Beryl Grey's interpretation a trifle obvious). But on Wednesday Beryl Grey's dancing lacked the precision of Monday's performance: hands tended to drift about aimlessly when they should have been still. Moreover she was hampered by some erratic conducting by Kenneth Alwyn, whose tempi never cease to astonish me. (They do worse than that to the unfortunate dancers.)

REVIVAL OF HARLEQUIN IN APRIL

John Cranko has two ways of tackling psycho-symbolical themes.

★ DAVID BLAIR
in *Petrushka*

★ BERYL GREY and
CAJ SELLING
in *Swan Lake*

★ BERYL GREY
in *Checkmate*

★ ANTOINETTE SIBLEY and
DAVID BLAIR
in *Harlequin in April*

★ ANYA LINDEN
in *Giselle*

★ GALA PERFORMANCE



Rehearsal picture of Antoinette Sibley as Columbine and David Blair as Harlequin, in the John Cranko ballet *Harlequin in April*

One is the very obscure manner of *Harlequin in April* (which may perhaps be traced back via the avant-garde ballets of Jerome Robbins to Martha Graham). The other is the rather obvious and sentimental manner of *The Shadow* (where the symbolism is dropped entirely for considerable periods). Neither manner really suits him: perhaps what he needs is something in between, a ballet with a theme complex enough to fill out the time and yet simple enough for him to project it adequately to the audience.

In *Harlequin in April* the mixture of ideas (from the Commedia dell'Arte, mediaeval mythology, The Golden Bough, psychoanalysis, the work of Jung, and I know not what else), is just as baffling as ever: the translation to a larger stage has made little difference in this respect. The music by Richard Arnell sounded as banal as before, and alone was enough to prevent the revival from giving much impression of unity.

Where the revival did stand out was in the performances of the principal roles. Two of the artists—Stanley Holden and David Blair—danced the roles they created; having matured a good deal since 1951, they were able to give greater depth and intensity to their interpretations. Stanley Holden was just as frustrated as before by the coarse clowning of the role of Pierrot—choreographically the role is almost non-existent—but what zest he put into his acting! Though David Blair had not fully recovered from the illness which seriously affected his dancing earlier in the week, he danced Harlequin with marvellous precision. As for Antoinette Sibley, taking her first major solo assignment, she managed to evoke in the twin roles of Flowering Plant and Columbine very much the same spring-like freshness as Patricia Miller, but added some remarkable qualities of her own—above all a remarkable and touching desperation as Flowering Plant. The twin roles did not give her much chance to deploy her fabulously expressive arm movements, but she made excellent use of her flexible body and long straight legs. Her assurance was, as always, very impressive: like Margot Fonteyn and many other great dancers, she seems to have been born with the power of taking command of the stage. Only at one point did she lose some of her self-possession: this was in the scene in which Columbine is made to clamber from the back of one Unicorn to another, over and over again. This clumsy gimmick is worked to death by Cranko, though it is quite ineffective, like a good deal of the choreography.

ANYA LINDEN'S GISELLE

When Anya Linden leaped over the stage in the *ballottées* of Giselle's first little solo, I sat up with excitement: she was dancing dead in time to the music, and the effect was very striking. In fact each step came over with warmth and vitality, and Giselle began to emerge as a real, living person.

Alas, her dancing was soon back to normal. Within a few minutes she was going right away from the beat, and this set up the familiar wall between her and the audience. In an article in the *Sunday Times*, of 8th March Margot Fonteyn described most vividly how she

dances out to the orchestra, and this clearly helps her to project herself out to the audience. I recommend this article to Anya Linden's attention: she must learn to use her ears, and stop dancing in a vacuum.

She interpreted Giselle much like a number of other roles taken by her, suggesting a girl who is very much of a gamine, with febrile, agitated movements. This Giselle belonged unmistakably to the city streets of our own day: one could almost imagine her in *West Side Story*. A few of her gestures showed some good ideas, but looked out of place because they did not fit in to the period of the ballet—as, for example, when she fanned herself with her hand to suggest that she was very hot after a dance. (A peasant girl might well do something like that: what was wrong was that she had her mouth open at the time, and failed to make the gesture fill out the music.)

She looked ravishing in Act II, with her hair dressed tightly to the sides of her head and making the best of her face, with its admirable cheek-bones. Given even a moderate degree of musicality, she might have made quite a lot of the choreography; but she kept no closer to the music than in Act I.

David Blair, as Albrecht, gave her all the support any Giselle could demand, and danced and acted superbly—particularly in Albrecht's final dances of exhaustion. It was gratifying to see him in form again, after those occasions in the previous week when he had struggled through his parts bravely in spite of illness.

COVENT GARDEN GALA

A mere ballet critic feels out of his depth at a grand gala at Covent Garden, with no less than two Royal Highnesses present, and a glittering display in the auditorium to match the glitter on the stage. He should really be a member of a team, along with a fashion correspondent and a journalist specialising in personalities. But at least I can report that Princess Margaret looked stunning in a white dress with embroidered red flowers; the Empire line was still to be seen (to some extent) and hem lengths varied from ground to knee level.

Choreographically, the novelty of the evening was *La Valse*, a new version of a ballet which Frederick Ashton arranged for Milan some years ago. Ravel's music presents an interesting challenge to the choreographer: it is fairly short (eleven minutes) and keeps to the waltz rhythm throughout, with a long crescendo. There is a slight change of mood (when, according to the composer, the clouds clear away) but in general the music keeps to the same mood of slightly mysterious gaiety.

Ashton in fact made little effort to meet the challenge of the music: what we saw, for the most part, was a swirling mass of dancers doing the familiar one-two-three waltz step in couples. There was no reflection of the steady build-up in the music, and no alternation of solos and group dances. (He did keep a small group of six young dancers slightly separate, but they invariably danced as a group, and often merged with the others.) Deirdre Dixon was outstanding in the

Continued on page 10



Recordings

Reviewed by BEDFORD CROWLE

ROMEO AND JULIET

Those lucky enough to have seen Ulanova in her most famous role, will scramble for the latest disc of excerpts from Prokofiev's score, Philips ABL3236. Only two of the nine items are new to the catalogue—the *Folk Dance* of the servants, and *Romeo and Juliet* which is the Balcony Scene and abounds in atmosphere—but it is the conducting of the New York P.O. that has all the answers—Mitropoulos has made an extensive study of this composer and outshines Charles Munch.

AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

Gershwin was commissioned by The Philharmonic Symphonic Society of New York to write this music; not, as many may think by Gene Kelly for his truly marvellous film, though it was he, of course, who gave it its widest audience. It is coupled with a, "symphonic picture" from Gershwin's opera, *Porgy and Bess*, Mercury MMA11004 and both are among his best works, very finely interpreted by Dorati and the Minneapolis S.O. This disc is in EMI's first issue of Mercury records and it is a joy to find that there is American brass with a rich round tone—heartily recommended.

LABYRINTH

Masse's ballet, symbolizing the classical tradition through the years, was set to Schubert's *Ninth Symphony*—the Great C Major—and of the two discs to hand, there is no doubt as to my choice. Toscanini's often praised drive, RCA. RB16079, reduces everything to a common denominator—monotony. There is not even time for the intensely dramatic moment at bar 248 in the second movement. Krips, on the other hand, Decca LXT5471, has no obsessions and his delicate lyrical approach will make you want to hear this performance time and time again. I can warmly recommend it.

IMMORTAL PAS DE DEUX

This record differs from the usual random selection of music from the ballet as it is a collection of famous pas de deux as far back as *Giselle* and down to the present day, HMV. CLP1239. They are well chosen to give a wide and interesting variety—the flamboyant pas de deux from Minkus' *Don Quixote* contrasting with that from the

gently romantic *Les Sylphides*. Record collecting is not a cheap hobby and this type of record is a great asset to those with small libraries. Robert Irving gives sound balletic performances with excellent playing from the R.P.O.

TRISTAN

Wagner's *Prelude and Liebestod* was choreographed last year by Herbert Ross with rather dubious success. However, it was a great inspiration for Petit's first abstract ballet, *Pas d'Action*, in the days of the Ballets de Paris. HMV's Wagner concert, ALP1638, also includes the *Lohengrin Preludes* and the *Prelude and Good Friday Music* from *Parsifal* played by the V.P.O. under the baton of Rudolf Kempe, who has made an international name for his interpretation of this composer. These truly beautiful works are handled with great care and affection making them a credit to any record collection.

THE NUTCRACKER

I am extremely sorry that I cannot be more enthusiastic about Ansermet's conducting of this ballet, Decca LXT5493-4, as one is anxious to encourage complete recordings—the usual suite, for instance, does not include the best of the music—but unfortunately his performance lacks life. This music should have all the sparkle and excitement that surrounded a Christmas tree in our childhood, which Dorati achieves in the older Mercury set, though the recording itself is not quite to Decca's standard.

VARIATIONS

How effectively Lifar's ballet showed off his ballerinas at the Paris Opera, to a score composed of a number of Schubert's piano pieces. It included some of the *Impromptus*, all of which, together with the hitherto unrecorded *Drei Konzertstücke*, are played with the utmost sensitivity by that great pianist, Gieseking, whom we so sadly miss, Columbia 33CX1611-2. The piano tone is excellent.

BOGATYRI

Masse's ballet about the Bogatyri, legendary Russian heroes of the early Middle Ages, is set to Borodin's *Second Symphony*, and the original prelude to the Nocturne of his *Second Quartet*. The latter, together with Tchaikovsky's *First Quartet*, is beautifully played by the Hungarian String Quartet, Columbia 33CX1581. A record that might well serve as an introduction to Chamber Music.

Books

Reviewed by PIGEON CROWLE

Drina Dances in Exile. By Jean Estoril. (Hodder and Stoughton, 10s. 6d.)

This is the third junior novel by Jean Estoril concerned with the exploits of the same heroine, the orphaned daughter of a famous dancer, who is, of course, born to dance. She has to overcome many obstacles on her way through high school dancing class, and ballet boarding school, but it is her triumph at the annual matinée at a London theatre to which the school is attached that ends the trilogy. The vicissitudes of school life, the parting from her grandparents, and holidays abroad are the background of Drina's student career with its main theme of classes, rehearsals and theatre, and the characters are well-drawn and varied. Girl-readers will enjoy these books.

The other two novels in this series are: *Ballet for Drina* and *Drina's Dancing Year*. (10s. 6d. each, Hodder and Stoughton.)

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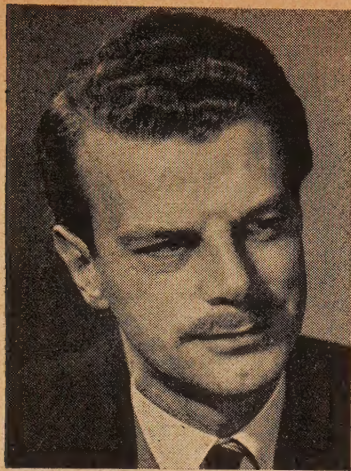
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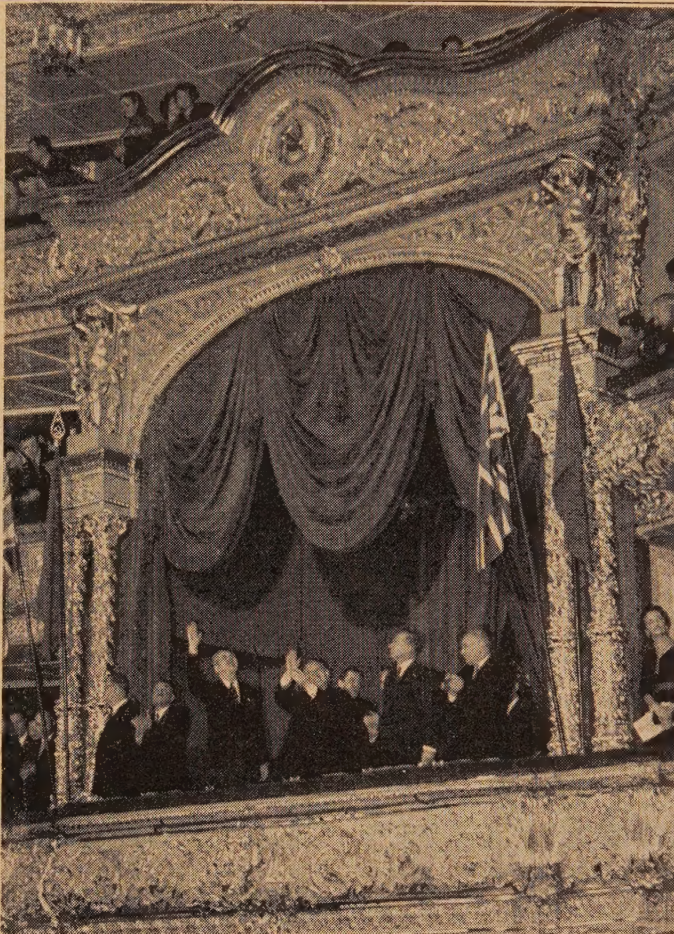
They Danced for Macmillan

From Roy MacGregor-Hastie in Moscow

TO any balletomane the prospect of an evening at the Bolshoi Theatre is an inviting one. It is even worth the days spent treading the thin pile on the red carpet in the Soviet Embassy in London waiting for a visa. When the Prime Minister announced in the Commons that he would be visiting the Soviet Union, there was little to be seen stirring in Notting Hill and the ballet forcing houses, but when Mr. Krushchev retaliated with the announcement that there would be not only talks at the Kremlin, but a command performance at the Bolshoi, even the ranks drawn up in W.11 could scarce forbear to cheer. When it leaked out that it was to be a Ulanova evening of *Romeo and Juliet* your correspondent re-doubled his efforts to get his past forgiven and a visa to the U.S.S.R.

When Tuesday the 25th came, there was no Ulanova. She had just published a forward looking notice of her retirement in the local press. At 48 she feels she ought to retire, before the pointes are blunted. Not even Mr. Macmillan's visit could persuade her to change her mind, when her friends advised her not to attempt a role she had created, and sustained so often. But there was Struchkova, and this was enough to compensate for the disappointment felt by the vast majority of the clutch of journalists following our Prime Minister around; the only ballet names they know are Ulanova, Fonteyn, Markova and Shearer.

The Bolshoi seemed to have been well prepared for the Command Performance. The crest above the curtain, with its effigy of Lenin, had been regilded—or perhaps refurbished by some "remont" establishment in the nearby Metropol Hotel. There was clean linen on the tables in all the buffets, and the waitresses were younger and better dressed than in 1957. The binoculars (three roubles a time) and the programmes (two roubles plus the unorthodox pourboire) were both cleaner and better finished. Mr. Macmillan came into the theatre to the glitter of gleaming brass in the orchestra



Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Krushchev with their entourages wave from the former Imperial Box of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow to acknowledge the applause of the audience as they arrive for a gala performance.

pit. Mr. Krushchev, applauding, stood by his side. There was a clatter of box doors being bolted (there are still too many chairs squeezed into the boxes) and the lights went down.

The superiority of a Bolshoi production (this one was by Prof. Williams) to that of any other company lies in its attention to detail. Not to any detailed reproduction of the decor of a medieval castello (though, no doubt, a group of well instructed research assistants worked on this for years before it was finalised) but to the

reproduction of the atmosphere induced by the best production of *Romeo and Juliet* at Stratford. Ballet is, at the best of times, a magical interlude, and a spell, once cast, must never be broken. There are five essential scene changes in the First Act, but there was never a hiatus. The orchestra (Faier was conducting) slid inevitably into a relevant intermezzo and what went on in front of the curtain seemed inevitable too. There is a great deal of ornate and cumbrous scenery in use at the Bolshoi, contrasting vividly with the drab

surfaces of the city outside the theatre.

Perhaps the availability of first class dramatic talent helps this sort of ballet along in a country as theatrically wealthy as the Soviet Union. Before the electricians started to check the lighting for Mr. Macmillan's first *Romeo and Juliet*, your correspondent went down to the Bolshoi School to see what trends in style are now apparent in the nursery. Mme. Gert, the Chief Instructress, felt that the days of the Ulanova tradition—that of the lyrical ballerina with a little dramatic talent added—were ended. Public taste demands a fuller, more theatrical presentation, even of the fairy tale. The new dancers—Maria Gorotskaya is probably the best—have a wealth of dramatic talent and an inclination to disprove the Bolshoi *mot* "A big girl leaves the Ballet School at fifteen and really learns to act on the stage." Dr. Chulaki has just retired as Director of the Bolshoi, and with him goes a score of years of "ballet improvement"; since his early days in Leningrad he has tried to fill the stage with movement, purposeful, unavoidable, but dramatic. There is only one lyrical ballerina in the mould of Ulanova—the eighteen-year-old Maximova (Katya); she has a long way to go before she can exert the influence of a Ulanova over her contemporaries.

Struchkova is a ballerina nearer to dramatic than to the Ulanova-lyrical. From all the parterre and the amphitheatre there were more than a few hysterical ravings that this was the greatest Juliet ever. The choreography helped Struchkova and there was a gala atmosphere on stage—the sort of "great gala" the Russians revel in—the sort of occasion to which they inevitably rise. Lavrovsky and Radlova—they were responsible for the new *Giselle* Second Act created by Ulanova in 1957—have a creative imagination, an ability to mix colour and sound and to spread it gently over movement.

In a superb production
Continued on page 10

GALA PERFORMANCE (contd.)

small group, dancing with such abandon that she incarnated the spirit of the waltz in its heyday (when it was considered naughty, even licentious) and made one forgive her for a rather slap-dash execution. The two other danseuses in the small group (Christine Beckley and Jacqueline Daryl) were disappointing: it is perhaps hard on them that the other young danseuses who have recently emerged from the corps de ballet have given us very high standards, but that is the way of the theatre.

The costumes of the girls, designed by the young Frenchman André Levasseur, were very pretty in their smoky shades of black and grey, with a few bright colours here and there; by emphasising a pointed basque he made the waists of the girls look tiny.

The high point of the evening was reached when Nadia Nerina and David Blair danced the *Don Quixote* pas de deux. They have danced this together on a good many occasions (notably recitals) and have brought it to such a pitch of perfection that one can hardly imagine it done better. We are fortunate to have in Nadia Nerina a superb example of a demi-caractère ballerina, with all the qualities needed to bring to life the roles composed for such artists. She has such a strong technique that she can laugh at the ferocious difficulties of these roles, and even add difficulties of her own: in fact she has (to the best of my knowledge) invented a new way of doing the *posé* turn, leaping definitely into the air and landing on one point at the beginning of the turn. She sparkles with exuberance, when exuberance is called for, but has a fine dramatic range and can suit the mood to the occasion. She is not the most beautiful ballerina and lacks the exquisite line of the classical ballerina but this is of no importance: no-one can touch her in the roles which suit her, and one may say she is carrying on where the Soviet ballerina Lepeshinskaya left off. I am sure Nerina is also capable of achievements falling right outside the narrow limits of the traditional demi-caractère roles; but that is another matter.

David Blair had quite a task to stand up to this phenomenal performance, but acquitted himself nobly: his manner was excellent, his turns rock-steady, and in the small solo of the coda he pulled out of the bag a crescendo of virtuosity that helped to make the end of the grand pas de deux exciting.

Two other dancers who did well were Merle Park, who danced with great charm and rhythmic vitality in a solo in Act III of *The Prince of the Pagodas*, and Graham Usher, who showed a fine technique and excellent line in a pas de trois from *La Fête Etrange*.

INTIMATE BALLET AND MUSIC AT CAMBERWELL

How often, where modern dance is concerned, does one write "What a good idea . . ." followed by "But what a pity . . ." or "if only . . ." This was all too true of the show of "Intimate Ballet and Music" presented by the New English Players at the Havil Hall, Camberwell on 30th January as part of a series of events arranged by the Camberwell Arts Council. I wholeheartedly salute this municipal initiative: it is something of which we need a great deal more, and the Camberwell Borough Council has given a splendid lead. It is moreover an excellent idea to combine a small group of musicians and a small group of dancers: in this way the dancers benefit from a "live" musical accompaniment far more satisfying than the usual piano. But there were the almost inevitable "buts". What is one to make of dancers who allow themselves to be seen on a stage dominated by two radiators and some fire extinguishers? (Two screens would have provided tactful camouflage.) The title "intimate ballet" was almost a complete misnomer, since the four dancers joined together only for one item, a *Mexican Hat Dance*, and even this was really a pas de deux with trimmings; what was more serious, most of the choreography was in a style belonging to the primitive days of modern dance, and was depressingly lacking in movement. (The dancers used their feet only to walk or run: one would have thought—quite wrongly—that Sigurd Leeder's classes included no training in spins, leaps, slides, beats, stamps or balances.) Most of the dancing was done by Ludmila Mlada, who revives the stereotype of the Central European danseuse of the thirties all too accurately: she has exactly the glazed eyes, rigid facial expression and stilted hands. When she smiles it is a grimace of the mouth without any change in the expression of the eyes. It is not that she lacks talent: what she lacks is the choreography to bring out her rather unusual talents. This became very clear for a moment in a dance composed by herself, *Lucifer*: she performed a wonderful step, with the foot arching forward and striking the ground heel-first with the toes bent up. This had real movement in it, and exactly expressed the arrogance of Lucifer. But it was gone in a flash, and there was no development of this admirable choreographic idea.

By far the best dance-item of the show was *Rain Prayer*, danced without music by Eileen Cropley (who showed such distinction in *Lylia* at the Related Arts Centre last November). *Rain Prayer* shows

(Continued in next column)

THEY DANCED FOR MACMILLAN (contd.)

Struchkova was a sputnik among women. If it is possible to highlight such a performance, then the pas de deux in the First Act, with Paris, then Romeo, attracted attention—perhaps because they were the first of many incredible dances. Unlike Ulanova, who seems to need a partner to sustain her in her aura of frailty—yet always overshadows a partner, losing him in the mists of her own virtuosity—Struchkova is an actress. She can play a part alone or in any of the crowded scenes and be outstanding without seeming to presume. The opera concept of ballet as a succession of arie interspersed with colourful crowd scenes has gone. In its place is the "full theatre", a "full theatre" in which Stanislavsky is at least as important as the ghost of Tchaikovsky.

When Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Selwyn Lloyd left the theatre late in the evening, after paying their respects (respect is a fair description of the emotions induced even in your correspondent by this incomparable display) they had seen the greatest shown on earth, at its best. One of his party was heard to remark: "Their feet never touched the ground, you know."

When they made their whirlwind tour of Kiev and Leningrad they found more to marvel at; though their stay in each place was limited to two days, there was a Gala ballet in each city. Kiev staged the *Forest Song* with Helena Patapova—the best dancer in the provinces, soon to leave for a tour of Europe and the Middle East; this is an unusual ballet and possibly above the heads of most of the Prime Minister's retinue, but they must have appreciated the beautiful décor, and it was splendidly lit. Leningrad was, perhaps, an "immoral" interlude. They danced the *Stone Flower*—like *Romeo and Juliet* a Prokofiev ballet; the dancing of Katerina (Kolpakova) as the inevitable maiden, losing then re-winning the love of her mason was a long way behind that of the heartless Goddess of stone. Belski, the Goddess was a flesh and blood seductress for all her supposed frigidity. I am afraid I would have chosen a life in a quarry with the Goddess. I wonder what the Foreign Office thought? They have issued no communiqué.

ROY MacGREGOR-HASTIE

a good deal of invention, as well as some intelligent study of primitive dances; since I last saw it, Miss Cropley has tightened it up, making the phrasing of the foot-beats even more crisp. She is clearly versatile: it would be hard to imagine anything more different from the serene wife of *Lylia* than this bold and exotic priestess. I believe that Miss Cropley would profit a great deal from the study of classical Hindu dancing, with its immense variety of moods, arm movements, head movements, steps and foot-rhythms. Even if she never performed an Indian dance in public, she could draw on this training in perfecting the line and rhythm of her own dances.

MODERN DANCERS AT ST. PANCRAS

The same dancers were to be seen performing similar items on February 26th in the inaugural concert of the St. Pancras Municipal Choir at St. Pancras Town Hall, as part of the St. Pancras Arts Festival. Here the scale was larger: the Assembly Rooms have a good-sized stage, and the dancers appeared in group items, supported by a "corps de ballet" from the Leeder school.

Two items were of interest, for very different reasons. One was a staging of choral dances from *Prince Igor*. I have only once seen these dances done properly, as part of a production of the opera, with a great ballet company interpreting Fokine's choreography and supported by a full chorus. This was in the early thirties, when a Ballet-Russe season and the International Opera Season overlapped at Covent Garden. The effect was unforgettable, and made clear the great value of choral singing in ballet. Unfortunately things were rather different at St. Pancras Town Hall, with a small and dim choir, new choreography by Jane Winearls which was distressingly amateurish, and some exceptionally clumsy dancing. (There was even a man who in physique and movement reminded me of Private Doberman in the Sergeant Bilko television series: nothing more unlike a ferocious Central Asian could well be imagined.)

The other interesting item was *Lylia*, previously shown at the Related Arts Centre. This gained by translation to a larger stage: Eileen Cropley and Rosemary Cockayne were able to give more breadth to their movements, and so made the dance element appear slightly stronger. On second viewing the idea of presenting three aspects of the same woman seemed as good as ever, but it was clear that something was wrong with the structure. The choreographer (Colin Paterick) must find some way of making the ballet build up instead of building down.

FERNAU HALL



In *Bolero*

Photo: Kurt Ulrich

CAREERS IN PICTURES

DULCE ANAYA

Dulce Anaya was born in Cuba, where at the age of 8 years she began to study ballet under George Milenoff at Pro-Arte Musical in Havana. Later she studied under Alberto and Alicia Alonso, and in New York under Anatole Oboukov and Pierre Vladimiroff.

At the age of 11 years she danced her first solo part at a "Pro-Arte Musical" dance festival, appearing as "the street dancer" in Fokine's *Petrouchka*.

She joined Ballet Theatre in New York at the age of 15, as Dulce Wohner, and toured the U.S.A. When the activities of this company were temporarily interrupted, she returned to Cuba.

Dulce Anaya then became a member of Ballet de Cuba, appearing with Igor Youskevitch, Alicia Alonso, Nicolas Magallanes, Melissa Hayden and others. This company made extensive tours throughout Central and South America. Having had a great personal success, Dulce Anaya soon became a ballerina.

In 1952 she again toured the U.S.A. with Ballet Theatre, and returned to Cuba, appearing then as guest at Pro-Arte Musical dance festivals and with Ballet de Cuba. In 1954 she again joined this company for its South American tour.

In 1957, dancing for the first time in Europe, as ballerina of the reorganized Stuttgart State Ballet, under the direction of Nicholas Beriozoff, she had a big success as Princess Aurora in the full-length

The Sleeping Beauty and other ballets. She also created the leading parts in Beriozoff's *Bal Champêtre* and *Bruch Concerto*.

In the summer of 1958 Dulce Anaya was invited to appear as guest artist during Munich's 800th Anniversary Festival at The Bavarian State Opera house where she danced the pas de deux from *Don Quixote*. And it was at the same theatre on January 25th, 1959, that she created the title role in Hans Werner Henze's *Undine*, with choreography by Alan Carter.

In February this year Dulce Anaya created the role of "Source de la Vie" in Yves Bonnat's ballet *L'Abîme* with choreography by Marcel Luipart to music by the French composer Marcel Landowsky, at the Essen Municipal Theatre.

After the première of *Undine* the Cuban Consul in Munich gave a supper in the Hotel Vierjahreszeiten which was attended by many important people in Munich's cultural life and of the State and City executive boards. Such was the impression that Dulce Anaya's performance made on these people that writing to me from Munich our critic, Dr. Wilfried Hofmann, commented "people spoke as if they had never seen ballet before, and it is my personal conviction that Dulce Anaya will bring about a renaissance of ballet here, for after only one year in Stuttgart, there are people who travel from Stuttgart to Munich to see her in every performance."



Eight-year-old Dulce Anaya as the Porcelain Doll in a children's ballet *The Fantastic Toyshop* presented by teacher George Milenoff.

created were the Young Girl in *Antes del Alba*; the leading dramatic rôle in *Delirium*; Echo in *Narcissus and Echo* and the leading rôles in the neo-classical ballets *Ensayo Sinfónico* and *Linium*.

*Only principal rôles are listed because in many instances Dulce Anaya has danced her way through corps de ballet—to soloist—to principal rôle. She was, for example, in the Bird-variation, when Bronislava Nijinska staged "Aurora's Wedding" for the American Ballet Theatre and did the Finger-variation and Bluebird in Latin America before dancing as Princess Aurora in Stuttgart. Also in *Swan Lake* she has danced the Two Swans, the Cygnets Pas de Quatre (which incidentally was danced by Melissa Hayden, Barbara Fallis, Paula Lloyd and Dulce). To include other rôles and creations would make an endless list.

MUNICH 1958 dancing in *Don Quixote* during the city's 800th Anniversary Festival.

DULCE ANAYA

*PRINCIPAL ROLES DANCED

Odette in	.. .. .	<i>Swan Lake</i>
Terpsichore } in	.. .. .	<i>Apollon Musagete</i>
Polymnia }		
Sugar-Plum Fairy in	.. .. .	<i>The Nutcracker</i>
All three principal roles in	.. .. .	<i>Les Sylphides</i>
(the Prelude in this ballet was her first solo part danced with a professional company)		
Swanilda in	.. .. .	<i>Coppelia</i> (II act)
Mlle. Taglioni } in	.. .. .	<i>Pas de Quatre</i>
Mlle. Grisi }		
Peasant Pas de deux in	.. .. .	<i>Giselle</i>
Pas de deux in:	.. .. .	<i>The Black Swan</i>
		<i>Don Quixote</i>
		<i>Bluebird</i>
The Bride in	.. .. .	<i>Beau Danube</i>
Principal Junior-Girl in	.. .. .	<i>Graduation Ball</i>
Title-role in	.. .. .	<i>Le Coq d'Or</i>
Girl in Yellow in	.. .. .	<i>Les Patineurs</i>
(of the American B.T. production)		
The Ballerina in	.. .. .	<i>Petrouchka</i>
The Young Girl in	.. .. .	<i>Le Spectre de la Rose</i>
Tartar Girl in	.. .. .	<i>Prince Igor</i>
The Bird } in	.. .. .	<i>Peter and the Wolf</i>
The Duck }		

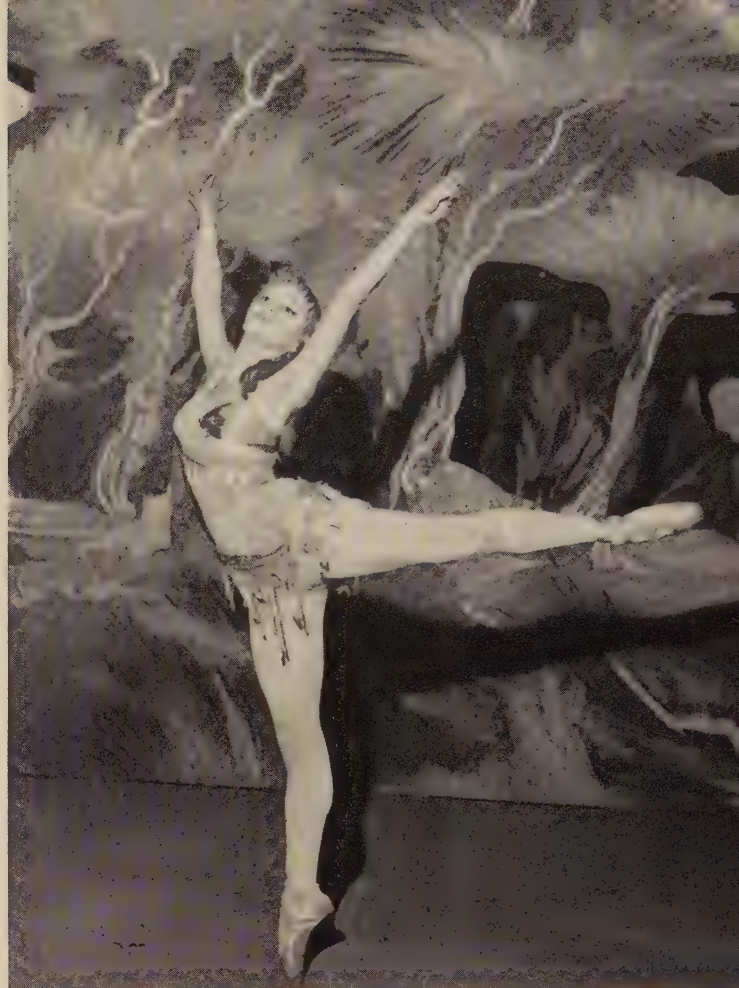
Of the Cuban works she has danced the leading-role in Alberto Alonso's neo-classical ballet *Concerto* (Vivaldi-Bach); the Guaracha in Enrique Martínez's *Fiesta* (now in the repertory of the Marquis de Cuevas); the Debutante in *La Valse*; and Lydia in *Lydia*. Rôles





At the age of sixteen dancing the Prelude in *Les Sylphides*

STUTTGART 1957 as Princess Aurora in the vision scene of *The Sleeping Beauty*



MUNICH 1959 in *Undine* at the Staatsoper, choreography by Alan Carter.
Photo: Toepff

In *Ensayo Sinfónico* with the Ballet de Cuba





Antonio as the Miller in *The Three Cornered Hat*
Photo: Houston Rogers

Tamara Toumanova and Vladimir Oukhtomsky in *Le Chevalier et la Princesse*

Photo: Annemarie Heinrich



BACK

ANTONIO is coming to England for a short provincial tour opening at the New Theatre, Oxford, on May 18th, appearing at the Hippodrome, Birmingham, the following week, and then for the next two weeks at the Palace Theatre, Manchester. The tour will be presented by Leon Hepner and C. B. Levitt.

Antonio will then proceed to Dublin to appear at the Festival for three days and after that will sail with his company from Liverpool for his first visit to South Africa.



LUDMILLA TCHERINA whose Company has opened a four-and-a-half-week season at London's Cambridge Theatre, has had an interesting career which commenced when Serge Lifar discovered her at the age of fourteen and cast her for the role of Juliet in his ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. She then became a star dancer at l'Opéra de Marseilles, and it was at this time she met Edmond Audran the dancer who became her first husband. She then began a film career with *Le Revenant*, followed by *The Red Shoes*, *The Tales of Hoffman* and *Parsifal*, and it was while this film was being made that her husband died tragically in a car accident. For two years after his death she renounced dancing, but after La Scala in Milan persuaded her to dance *Giselle*, a new phase in her career began. She created *L'Atlantide*, and the Paris Opera engaged her to play the part of Saint Sebastien. This proved to be a turning point in her career because for the first time the dancer became a tragedienne. After a disagreement with the Paris Opera about the suitability of her costume for *L'Atlantide* Miss Tcherina refused to dance in the ballet, and it was then she decided to form her own Company.

Miss Tcherina is also a talented painter and some years ago held an exhibition of her work in Gilberte Cournand's famous "Library la Danse" in Paris. In this present programme she is also responsible for designing the sets and costumes for *Gunpowder Flash*, the ballet by Jean Renoir.

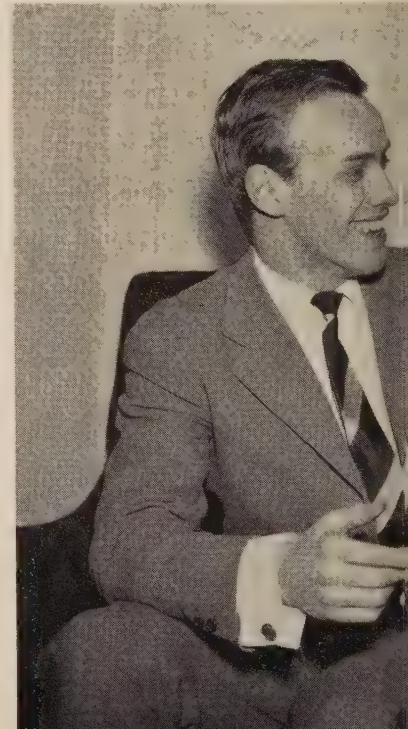


TAMARA TOUMANOVA whose season opens at the Sadler's Wells Theatre in April needs no introduction to London audiences having been with the Festival Ballet in 1952 and 1954 as guest artist and danced here on many other occasions. With her in the London season will be Vladimir Oukhtomsky who has also partnered Toumanova at her concerts given at the Piccolo Scala in Milan and for a Grand Gala in honour of Prince Rainier's wedding; he toured twice with her in South America in 1956, extensively in the United States in 1956-57, then in Central and South America and in South Africa. He has appeared twice on London's B.B.C. television programme.



Ludmilla

Beryl Gr



T A G E



JOHN GILPIN has been made Assistant Artistic Director of Festival Ballet and renewed his contract with the Company as premier danseur for the next two years. This announcement will at last kill the rumours started by the "I Predict" column in the *Daily Express*. Readers who wrote to me "isn't it a pity . . ." or "is it true . . ." that John Gilpin is leaving Festival Ballet . . ." may well wonder why this particular ghost was not more promptly laid, but as John's contract was due for renewal naturally no one was prepared to make a statement.



CELIA FRANCA, founder-director of the National Ballet of Canada, made her farewell appearance as a dancer on the stage of Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre during February. Eight candles topped the three-tier cake to mark the eighth birthday of the ballet company which she founded in 1951. Telegrams and bouquets came from many parts of the world with good wishes from famous dancers and ballet personalities. Miss Franca danced *Giselle* for her farewell performance in Toronto, but she will dance once more during the company's tour of the midwestern U.S.A. and then hang up her pointe shoes in order to concentrate all her energy on building the National Ballet of Canada into one of the world's ranking companies.

The repertoire of the Company now includes more than 40 ballets; 16 of them original Canadian works and including the full length classics, four ballets by Antony Tudor, and others by Walter Gore, and Frederick Ashton.

Writing of Celia Franca's farewell performance in *Giselle* Nathan Cohen, critic for the *Toronto Star*, said "Miss Franca is not giving up that time-consuming, energy-draining part of her activities on an impulse

—Continued in next column



BERYL GREY and **CAJ SELLING** seen here at a press reception held at the Royal Opera House (reported in *Editor's Log* on page 4) are dancing together in three full length classical ballets during their season at Covent Garden. Their performance in *Swan Lake* is reviewed in our *London Review* pages this month, together with Beryl Grey's appearance in *Checkmate*. The other two ballets in which Miss Grey and Mr. Selling appear are *Giselle* and *Sleeping Beauty*. Fernau Hall will review the former and Oleg Kerensky the latter in our next issue.

Beryl Grey and Caj Selling also appeared as guest artists at the Gala Performance given at the Royal Opera House on Tuesday, 10th March in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and H.R.H. Princess Margaret.



John Gilpin

or because toil and diminishing stamina have exacted their toll. The real reason is that the Company she set up at the invitation of a group of enterprising women nearly a decade ago has now reached a point in its development where its work speaks for itself, and where her presence as a dancer is no longer needed as a box-office enticement . . ."

Celia Franca

Photo: Elizabeth C. Frey



na

Selling





Norman Dixon with Ann Horn in *Giselle* Act II

MEN IN BALLET

NORMAN DIXON

NORMAN DIXON was born in a small country town in Northamptonshire and from an early age was interested in music and the theatre, although there were no family connections with the theatre. He had started his own amateur drama group and wrote and produced plays before becoming a Bevin Boy* during the war.

Working in a coal mine near Burton-on-Trent he became associated with amateur drama there, and to fit him for a musical comedy part was sent for lessons to the local ballet school (St. Modwens) to learn a hornpipe. Here his talent was recognised and he was advised to take up dancing. Linda Bowler became his first teacher and training began seriously just before his 21st birthday.

After the war he had an audition for the International Ballet School and was unsuccessful, but was accepted at the Sadler's Wells School, at Colet Gardens, London. He found progress extremely frustrating, and he was finally told that he showed no promise.

Determined to become a dancer he did not give up, and was finally accepted at the Rambert School. Upon the return of the company from their tour of Australia he joined them later in the year, dancing for the first time in the corps of *Plaisance* and *The Fugitive*. Before joining he created a short student choreographic work which seemed to impress Madame Rambert.

Dixon's first visit abroad to Belgium with the company was quickly followed by another to Germany. Walter Gore and Paula Hinton

were a great help in this early period, and also Margaret Hill, who taught him a great deal.

After almost five years apprenticeship dancing all the male corps roles in the repertoire, Dixon danced the Canzonetta in *Soirée Musicale* and was given one matinée performance of the *Venus* pas-de-deux in Birmingham. Gradually the leading artists left the company and during a period of inactivity of Ballet Rambert Dixon joined the Walter Gore Ballet Company for its first performances in Malvern, dancing in *The Gentle Poltergeist* (still one of his favourite ballets) *Light Fantastic* and other ballets. He rejoined Ballet Rambert for their Sadler's Wells season and danced the leading male role in Jack Carter's *Past Recalled* (another favourite ballet).

By this time Dixon was dancing a number of solo roles in *Dark Elegies*, a ballet for which he has a very deep affection, and Hilarion in *Giselle*, which in recent years has been considered by critics to be one of three famous contemporary portrayals of this role.

He also took the leading male roles in *Simple Symphony* and *Fireflies*.

It was not until the creation of Saint Léon in Robert Joffrey's *Pas de Déesses* that Dixon began dancing the classical roles, although previously he had enjoyed the experience of the pas-de-trois in *Swan Lake* and the peasant pas-de-deux in *Giselle*. But now in quick succession, after the departure of Bennett and Poole, he took over the roles of Albrecht in *Giselle*, the poet in *Les Sylphides* which he says he loves dancing but realising his capabilities knows that it is not really suited to him, and he created the role of Frantz in the famous Rambert production of *Coppelia*, and the leading role in Ronald Yerrell's

* A war-time measure introduced by Mr. Ernest Bevin to ensure sufficient labour in the mines.



With Patricia Dyer filming *Les Sylphides* in Peking during the Ballet Rambert tour of China

The Mirror. In the production of the former Dixon remembers with gratitude the help and interest which Peggy Van Praagh extended to him.

Dixon has been the leading male dancer of Ballet Rambert for the past two years during which they were the first ballet company to tour China, visiting Peking, Nanking, Shanghai and other cities.

Other countries which he has visited include Italy, France, Ireland, Spain and Portugal where, with Patricia Dyer, a former ballerina of Ballet Rambert, he appeared as guest artist with the Margarida Abreu Company at the San Carlos Opera House in Lisbon where they danced the pas-de-deux from *Casse Noisette* and a suite of dances from *Giselle* Act II.

During the annual season of Ballet Rambert at Sadler's Wells Theatre, Dixon appeared in all the leading classical roles, as the lover in *Lilac Garden* and in *Dark Elegies*—Antony Tudor's early masterpieces.

He has recently appeared on B.B.C. Television in *Façade*, and also in Margaret Dale's production of *The Nutcracker* (with Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes in the leading roles). On Independent Television he has partnered Lucette Aldous, Rambert's present prima ballerina, in the *Coppelia* pas-de-deux.

In 1958 Dixon created his first ballet *Voice in the Wilderness* to a symphonic poem with cello obligato by Bloch. It was presented at Wyndham's Theatre, London, on 8th June by the Sunday Ballet Club, and scored a considerable success with Miss Ann Horn, in a role especially created for her, winning high praise.

At present Dixon is preparing another ballet for the Sunday Ballet Club programme in April, and is writing a book of personal views and ideas of contemporary dancers from the leading companies to be published next autumn. He is also engaged on plans for a programme of ballet for I.T.V.

... ROLES DANCED ...

Albrecht, Hilarion and peasant pas-de-deux	..	..	in <i>Giselle</i>
Prince, Benno, and pas-de-trois.	..	..	in <i>Swan Lake</i>
Poet	..	..	in <i>Les Sylphides</i>
Frantz	..	..	in <i>Coppelia</i>
Antony Tudor's ballets:			
Third and fifth dances and pas-de-deux	..	..	in <i>Dark Elegies</i>
Lover and Husband	..	..	in <i>Lilac Garden</i>
Canzonetta and Tarantella	..	..	in <i>Soirée Musicale</i>
French Cavalier	..	..	in <i>Gala Performance</i>

... Leading Male Roles in ...

Walter Gore ballets: *Simple Symphony*; *Plaisance*
Fireflies; *Winter Night*
Death and the Maiden (Andrée Howard)
Past Recalled (Jack Carter)
Bar at the Folies-Bergère (Ninette de Valois)
Fate's Revenge; *House of Cards* (David Paltenghi)
Movimientos (Michael Charnley)

Scotch Dance, Popular Song and Tango in *Façade* (Frederick Ashton)

... ROLES CREATED ...

Saint Léon in *Pas de Déesses* (Robert Joffrey)
The Man in *The Mirror* (Ronald Yerrell)
The Bridegroom in *Epithalame* (Deryk Mendel)
Leading male role in his own ballet *Voice in the Wilderness*
Teachers: Mme Rambert, Volonine, Idzikowski, Angela Ellis,
David Ellis, Mme Ivanova Sadler's Wells, Eileen Ward,
Kathleen Crofton



Dawne Macfarlane and Poul Gnatt of the New Zealand Ballet Company in *La Sylphide*

Photo: Brash

News from the World

NEW ZEALAND

by

KEITH WOODS

The writer of this article was one of the founders of a non-commercial group formed in New Zealand, and known as *Les Archives de la Danse (Auckland)*, whose aim is to promote greater interest in ballet in their own country. Mr. Woods is also the Editor of the group's monthly journal *En Avant*.

ALTHOUGH the first New Zealand "theatre" opened in 1842 and opera companies flourished in the years following 1850, it was not until 1913 that the first famous dancer, Adeline Genée, arrived; prior to this dances and ballets had been performed but only as interludes in operas and dramas. In the following thirty years we were visited by Pavlova and a couple of the de Basil companies, but it was not until 1945 that any indigenous group of quality appeared.

Meanwhile, 1,200 miles away in Australia, a similar state of affairs existed until 1939 when Borovansky, Kirsova and others attempted to form rival companies. Borovansky was the most successful and under the direction of J. C. Williamson Theatres soon toured this country and continues to do so at three-yearly intervals. Other visitors since the war have included the Australian National Theatre Ballet, Ballet Rambert, and national dance groups such as those directed by Dunham and Luisillo.

The first serious attempt to form a national company was made by Beryl Nettleton and Bettina Edwards, our two leading R.A.D. teachers, and their group, the Repertory Theatre Ballet, was in existence for four years. During this time it made several New Zealand tours for Community Arts Service. Several other groups followed without achieving much distinction and in 1953 Poul Gnatt settled here following his tour with the Borovansky Ballet.

After a number of amateur performances with his group, which took the name New Zealand Ballet Company, Gnatt selected three dancers to go with him on a C.A.S. tour. This group has since increased to twelve and at least one, and sometimes a second, five-month New Zealand tour is made each year. Only one programme is presented on each tour, in the course of which about 100 performances are given before a total audience of 50,000. The company foundation has 4,000 members and a single tour will involve the dancers in travelling 10,000 miles. Occasional seasons are given with an increased company and many of the classic Russian and Danish works are included in the thirty ballets presented in the past five years.

Although this is our sole professional company, other groups are active. In Christchurch Irina Kalnins, late of the Latvian State Ballet, heads a group of teachers who produce regular seasons and in Wellington there exists another group of teachers calling themselves the Wellington Ballet Theatre. I understand that some good ballets have been presented by Mme. Kalnins and that the group contains several pleasing dancers. The Wellington group is better than any other amateur group I have seen and amongst the danseuses are those who I consider the best, amateur or professional, in New Zealand. A second Wellington group has been organised by the teacher Galina Wassiliewa and this year has performed *Coppelia* in both Wellington and Christchurch.

The most recent group to be formed and probably soon the best of the amateurs, is the Auckland Ballet Theatre headed by Russell Kerr. In addition to these groups there are several ballet clubs, the strongest being in New Plymouth and Gisborne.

All these have been active in the past year. Borovansky toured



Wendy Smith and Grant Wright of Irina Kalnins Ballet in *Serenade*.

early in the year, bringing the complete *Swan Lake*, *Casse Noisette*, *Les Sylphides* and *Graduation Ball*, with Kathleen Gorham, Elaine Fifield, Jessica Folkerts and Juliana Webster, Vassilie Trunoff, Kenneth Melvin and Garth Welch as principals. Peggy Sager, a Borovansky "regular," did not appear due to illness and has now retired from the stage. Always a favourite with New Zealand audiences, Kathleen Gorham, deservedly, eclipsed her previous successes: her *Swan Lake* was particularly magnificent. In spite of having such a rival, Elaine Fifield was fairly well received despite her coldness and less-sure technique. Vassilie Trunoff, best known as a character dancer, did well as danseur noble and John Auld, the principal character dancer, was, as always, excellent. Other prominent and pleasing soloists were Pamela Proud, Jill Bathhurst, and Rosemary Mildner.

A highlight of the year was a tour by Luisillo and his Spanish Dance Theatre. This was, for many New Zealanders, their first introduction to Spanish dancing but the artistry of Luisillo's productions and the dancing of every member of the company sent the audiences raving.

The New Zealand Ballet Company toured with *La Sylphide*, *Badinage* and *Sentiments of Vienna*. The latter is a hilarious ballet in three scenes by Poul Gnatt. *Badinage*, by Fredbjorn Bjornsson, is the ballet recently given in Denmark under the name *Skaelmerier*. Although a valuable addition to the company's repertoire, *La Sylphide* is not quite suitable for touring under New Zealand conditions. Principal roles were successfully taken by Valerie Whyman, Dawne Macfarlane, Poul Gnatt and Ian Walker.

The most outstanding of the amateur groups was Auckland Ballet Theatre. Its inaugural season of *Casse Noisette* and *Les Sylphides* made us look forward to this season of *Coppelia* and for young amateurs it was a very fine effort. Based on Lander's version, it was made into three acts by Russell Kerr who also appeared as Frantz. Other soloists were Phyllis Korff, Colleen Tangye and Tom Macgregor. Russell Kerr also produced *Les Sylphides* and a number of short pieces for Wellington Ballet Theatre at a New Plymouth festival.

REPORT FROM

Venice

—By ROBERT PATERSON

BELGRADE STATE OPERA PRINCE IGOR

Borodin's celebrated but rarely heard opera was given at the Fenice on the 29th and 31st January. At the second performance the frenzied and prolonged applause at the end of the famous Polovtsi dances was so great that the conductor had to recall the orchestra, and the last part of the ballet was repeated. Then, after renewed outbursts from all over the house, the dancers ran down to the footlights and applauded the orchestra, which enthusiastically returned the compliment. Such scenes in the Fenice must be almost without precedent; certainly nothing like this has occurred there within my experience.

It is more than forty years now since I have seen these Polovtsi dances. Well can I remember the occasion at the Coliseum round about Armistice time 1918, when Diaghilev's Ballets Russes had got away from Spain, and were giving a short season in London. It was the first time I had seen a proper ballet, and I can still recall the thrill when, after the usual programme of jugglers, conjurors, acrobats, singers etc., a different conductor appeared and Borodin's wonderful music began. Such is the power of this music that one knows the ballet must be a success even before a single dancer has entered.

On this occasion at the Fenice, as the ballet was given with the opera, the wild, triumphant singing of the warriors and their women accompanied the dancers and spurred them on to give of their very best. The scene was unforgettable: both sides of the stage were fringed with spectators as far back as the depth permitted; a few lances were stacked here and there, and in the far distance could be glimpsed the camp fires of the Polovtsi outposts. Khan Kontchak and Prince Igor occupy seats of honour downstage, and the warrior dancers and maidens whirl and leap in an ever increasing fury of movement and excitement. A stupendous entertainment!

That the Belgrade dancers acquitted themselves well goes without saying. Although the three soloists—Katarina Obradovic, Mira Sanjina and Milan Momcilovic, were excellent as leaders of their respective groups, it is the corps de ballet as a whole that must be praised, both for its perfect timing and its amazing speed and energy.

The programme stated that the choreography was Fokine's "realised" by Anica Prelic. It is too long ago for me to recall the choreography in the Coliseum production, but I am fairly sure there was little or no repetition in it. Anica Prelic has organised her dancers into four groups—the Polovtsi

warriors, two sets of Tartar women, and one group of languorous girls by way of contrast. This was all right up to the moment when the four groups had each danced in turn; but they then proceeded to repeat themselves, which in a dance of this kind showed a sorry lack of invention. If ever there was a dance that should appear as though it were improvised on the spot the dance of the Polovtsi is such, par excellence. Repeat anything and the spontaneity is gone. This particularly applies to the men, who should get wilder and fiercer as the dance proceeds. I seem to remember much more abandon and play with bows and arrows in the original production.

The splendid decor from sketches by Miomir Denic and executed by Dusan Ristic was nearly as striking as Roerich's original back-drop. The costumes, by Milica Babic were traditional for the men, and not too happily stylised in the case of the girls. A modern, jazzy note had crept in here, which was out of place.

The playing by the Fenice orchestra well earned the dancers' applause. Led by Oskar Danon, conductor at the Belgrade Opera House, the players surpassed themselves. The Opera was sung in Russian, and was being presented for the first time in Venice.

Holland

—By JANET SINCLAIR

Six months ago the dancers of the Netherlands Ballet presented a list of suggestions to their Director Sonia Gaskell, most important of which being the appointment of a ballet master, the establishment of rehearsal rosters so all the dancers did not sit round the studio from morning till night and then go home without rehearsing at all, and the separation of the business direction from the artistic direction of the troupe. Miss Gaskell's reaction, after appointing Benjamin Harkavy from New York as ballet master, was to hand in her resignation and retire to Paris. She was, however, quickly persuaded by the authorities to withdraw her resignation, being granted a year's leave to recuperate from the enormous strain of four years' work setting up the Netherlands Ballet. On Monday, 23rd February, she returned to the studio of the company in the Hague, and on the following day ballet again hit the headlines—in many cases the front page as well—with the news that Miss Gaskell had again resigned, this time "irrevocably." As common to newspapers each treated this in its own fashion, some merely reporting that there seemed still to be difficulties in the troupe over the separation of art and business, others accusing four dancers—Aart Verstegen, Jaap Flier, Rudi van Dantzig and Rene Vincent—of presenting an ultimatum to Miss Gaskell as she stepped inside the door, unknown to the rest of the company.

Whatever the truth of the matter may be—and a little bird who was present in the studio on the occasion of Miss Gaskell's return

tells quite a different story from that reported in the newspapers—it now seems pretty clear that the constitution of the Netherlands Ballet cannot continue as at present. For one thing, Miss Gaskell cannot indefinitely continue with resigning and not resigning; on the other hand, if Aart Verstegen (outstandingly Holland's leading dance artist), Jaap Flier (described by local Gaskellite critics as "better than Dolin" as Albrecht), Rudi van Dantzig (Holland's most interesting young choreographer) plus no doubt Willy de la Bye (ballerina of the troupe, also Mrs. Flier) were to go elsewhere, there would not be much left of the Netherlands Ballet to show for five years' work and a staggering amount of public money.

Meanwhile negotiations continue for the amalgamation of the Ballet der Lage Landen and the Netherlands Opera Ballet. It is very hard to fathom what purpose the Amsterdam County Council imagine will be fulfilled by creating another over-large company, presumably to perform the classical repertoire. The present director of the Opera Ballet has been busy for six months on a subsidy for the season of over £22,500 and produced merely what has been described as "the worst performance the Opera Ballet has ever given." It has to be seen whether Masche ter Weeme, whose small company has been working, under difficult financial circumstances, for nearly twelve years, and almost always in perfect taste, to produce an interesting contemporary repertoire will succeed when dealing with matters on a "grand" scale.

Egypt

—By WALENS

I journeyed to Alexandria to be present at the Dance Gala held by the Gorilovich group at the Théâtre Mohamed Aly on December 6th. This is the largest theatre in the city and seats 2,300. The Gorilovich classical dance group was started 25 years ago. At this time Mme. Maria Gorilovich and her daughter Melle. Clara created the first Institute in Alexandria. Since then ballet is considered as an artistic pursuit, as well as a social objective. The Institute has 55 dancers and to its credit some sixty spectacles and tours made to Cairo.

For two hours the dancers held the spectators. Melle Africa Filacouridis and Melle. Yolanda Ravelli showed pure line, grace and sensitivity. The programme included extracts from classical and modern ballets, which were well danced, with feeling.

The Festival of classical dances closed in Alexandria with the Ballet d'Alexandrie directed by Mme. George, in a performance at the Théâtre Mohamed Aly under the patronage of the Minister of Culture and Arts. In the audience there were a large number of tourists who had put in at the port of Alexandria.

The choreography was interpreted by the dancers with feeling and the programme was very well received.

For three weeks running the cinema in Cairo has been showing the Soviet masterpiece *Swan Lake*. It is a faithful recording in Sovcolor of the Tchaikovsky masterpiece. One had the feeling of being at the Bolshoi itself, in the foyer of the theatre, and even penetrating into the wings.

REPORT FROM

New York

—By WALTER SORELL

Keita Fodeba's Ballets Africains has come to these shores to rave notices of the local press. In spite of the fact that the censor was in no conciliatory mood and demanded that the bareness of the breasts be removed from the stage the show has still left sufficient theatricality to console the onlookers over the loss of nudity. Since the ethnic character has not been preserved in its purity and the stress has been put on delivering a good show in which the ethnological material became impregnated with the spirit of Parisian chic, unnecessarily stressed by the decor, it makes little difference whether two of the girls give an inkling of African reality, or not.

Mr. Fodeba, now a cabinet member in the government of his newly independent country, stressed the difficulty in presenting ethnic dances in a theatrical form. The ethnic dancer does not intend to communicate, he dances for himself. But theatre is communication. In this discrepancy lie the pitfalls of all presentations dealing with such material of another, more primitive culture. That it loses some of its genuineness on stage has to be expected, and the Ballets Africains is no exception to the rule. But some of the atmosphere of village life, of the social habits and rituals has gone into this show which manages to captivate large audiences.

* * *

Jean Philippe Rameau's *Pygmalion*, an Acte de Ballet, was heard and seen at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in a program

called "Music Forgotten and Remembered." It was a thirty-five-minute aural and visual delight.

"Rameau has made of music a new art," wrote his contemporary Voltaire, and today we must be grateful for the opportunity to hear this old and forgotten music again. Under Frederic Waldman's leadership it received an excellent rendition. The orchestra sounded spirited and the singers were very impressive, particularly Charles Bressler who mastered the taxing part of Pygmalion with eloquence and a wonderful feeling for its lyric quality. Half the stage was occupied by the orchestra. The opera and dances had to cope with the limited space of the other half. But, despite these limitations, everything that happened on stage was in style and good taste. The young dancer, Joyce Trisler, who, previously this season, had called attention to her remarkable abilities, danced with Oldyna Dynowska and Brunilda Ruiz the three Graces and was also responsible for the choreography.

The ballet began with the necessity to teach the animated statue how to move and move gracefully, and it ended with a Rondeau. Nine different pre-classic dance forms were used, such as Gavottes, a Menuet and Chaconne. Miss Trisler's dances were always part of the plot and furthered the action. She involved the singers in some of the dances and was even able to make the chorus dance. That bit of gawkiness in their movements

seemed to fit their roles as peasants. The graceful employment of two court moors gave the ballet humour and colour. Frederic Cohen was the director of this forgotten Acte de Ballet which turned into an act of enchantment in this production.

* * *

A new avant-garde dance film was recently shown. *The Very Eye of Night* by Maya Deren, in choreographic collaboration with Antony Tudor, is a visual adventure into celestial spheres of an imaginative existence in non-existence. The negative in which the film is shown becomes the positive, the blackness of night turns into the whiteness of light. The dancers move as if all ground and gravity were erased and they could float without response to and responsibility for direction and space.

It is difficult to say how much Antony Tudor contributed to this eye-filling excitement, but Maya Deren whose other shorts shown at the same time have a hypnotic effect of otherness is, no doubt, a great artist. A great artist who is a seer. *The Very Eye of Night* is poetic in its dreamlike surrealist quality. It asks the spectator to check his dubious sense of reality in the cloakroom and ride on Miss Deren's daring imagination along the thin edge between Yes and No into the land of her creation. For those who could follow her it was a new and stimulating experience.

Chicago

—By GEORGE JACKSON

Other ballet companies come and go but Sergei Denham's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo is here year after year, touring back and forth across the United States and southern Canada. During the late 40's and early 50's when Frederic Franklin was ballet master (and premier danseur) the company's corps de ballet was often accused of very ragged dancing. But despite the poor ensemble work Franklin was able to evoke the particular style of each ballet. Michel Katcharoff, assuming the duties of ballet master in the mid 50's, improved the mechanical cohesion of Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo's performances but there was a dissipation of style. All ballets were danced in approximately the same way. At present the duties of ballet master seem to be distributed among a number of soloists. It is too soon to judge the ultimate effect of this policy, however the most satisfactory performances during the company's recent Chicago season (December 24 to January 4) were revivals of 19th Century ballets—*Swan Lake* Act 2 and *The Nutcracker* after Ivanov, *Raymonda* Act 3 after Petipa, and *Coppelia* and *Giselle* after Sergieff's editions.

Giselle was especially excellent. Irina Borowska, Tatiana Grantzeva and Gertrude Tyven led an impressive corps of Wilis. Two Polish dancers, Edmund Novak as Hilarion and Irina Kovalska as Giselle's mother, gave individuality to roles which are so often routine. In the leading parts of *Giselle* and Albrecht there were very great performances by Alicia Alonso and Igor Youskevitch and very good ones by Nina Novak and George Zoritch.

The Alonso—Youskevitch interpretation has been famous for a number of years. As successors to the team of Markova—Dolin they see their roles in a romantic light. Giselle is a frail girl inspired beyond the usual peasant capacities by love and Albrecht is simply in love. With seemingly effortless dancing they impart a period fragility to their virtuoso techniques. Formerly one overlooked the somewhat slick and perfunctory way in which they mimed the first act's love scenes, but having recently become familiar with Soviet versions of *Giselle*, Alonso and Youskevitch restudied their love making. There is less flirtation and greater sincerity—an altogether welcome change.

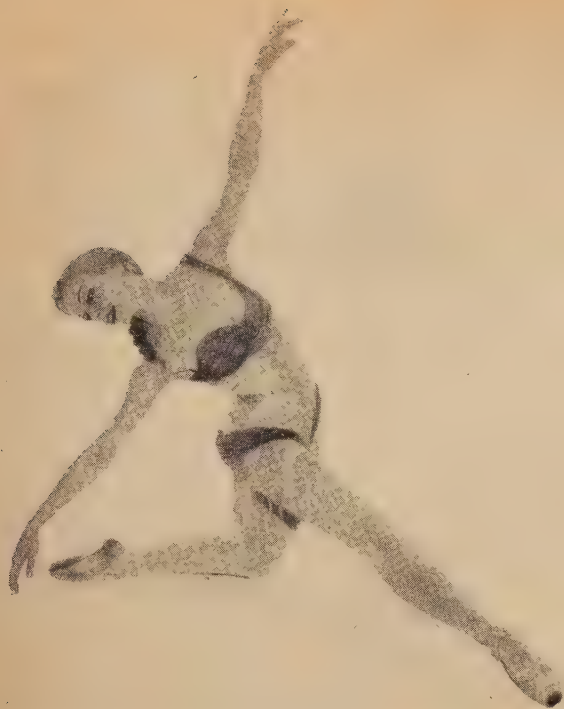
Nina Novak's *Giselle* is far from frail and shy; she is almost bold in her loving and dancing. This untraditional interpretation of the character is justified when Giselle reaches out to touch the duchess' gown, when she denounces the duchess' engagement to Albrecht, when she defies the Wili's command and in numerous other dramatic details. Novak is to be congratulated not only for a novel characterization but also for her dancing. She has always been best as an allegro dancer with more than ample speed in beats, turns and jumps. But in studying *Giselle*, which is a new role for her, she has improved her qualities as an adagio dancer, particularly her balance. At present incomplete line is the only major defect in her technique, one which was partially hidden by Giselle's knee length skirt. But even behind cloth is was apparent enough to deprive Novak's second act of the complete ethereal quality which even a bold *Giselle* should have. Zoritch's elegance and virility made his

Albrecht the best danced of recent seasons, but his exaggerated histrionics detracted from the total performance.

The competence of Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo's classical revivals did not extend to performances of works by Diaghilev generation choreographers. Of Fokine's *Les Sylphides* and *Scheherazade*, Massine's *Gaité Parisienne* and *Le Beau Danube*, Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial* and *Pas de Trois* (Minkus), and Boris Romanoff's *Harlequinade* (Drigo) only the latter was danced with anything resembling its originally inherent style.

Of newer ballets two slight efforts, Nina Novak's *Variations Classiques* (Brahms) and Leon Danielian's *Sombreros* (Boutnikoff) were retained from recent seasons. Two pas de deux were premiered: a dramatic *Romeo and Juliet* (Tchaikowsky) by Alberto Alonso of the Cuban ballet for his sister-in-law Alicia and Igor Youskevitch (decor by Leo Vigildo) and an untitled one incorporating sensational aspects of Soviet technique by Edmund Novak (to music by Hazel Draper) for his sister Nina and a partner. Both pas de deux were withdrawn after one showing.

Following the ballet into the Civic Opera House for five performances was the Russian folk dance group Beryozka. In contrast to the ballet this troupe's attention to detail, total sense of style, the good taste of the costuming and Nadezhda Nadezhkina's choreography earned them wild applause, full houses and rave reviews despite a lack of male dancing and dramatic variety compared to last season's Soviet visitors, the Moiseyev Dancers.



UNDINE

IN MUNICH

Long ago it was said that ondines appeared in harbours, casting their deadly spells over all men unlucky enough to be chosen.

For decades it seemed as if these sweet but dangerous creatures had died away, but this of course could not very well be true, since ondines enjoy immortality and exist all times in all places.

So we were thrilled to hear that in October last year an Ondine turned up down London way. I now report another in Munich.

It becomes clear that ondines have changed their tactics. To-day they are not satisfied with casting spells over their partners only, they appear in ballets to captivate full audiences night after night.

Dulce Anaya in *Undine*.

Photo: Kurt Ulrich

MUNICH has its première of *Undine* in the Prinzregentheater on January 26. As in the case of *The Prince of the Pagodas*, *Undine* followed shortly after the world première by the Royal Ballet. And again the Munich team consisted of Alan Carter as choreographer and producer and Fabius v. Gugel (who already has done the decors for *Giselle* and *The Prince*). Hans Werner Henze was conducting.

The Munich production—as compared with the Royal Ballet's—shows a slight adjustment of the score, and an interpretation of the libretto which slightly deviates from Ashton's version, this way avoiding quite a few of the criticisms levelled against the London production.

Carter's hero, Palemon, is a young Italian fisherman who obviously indulges in day-dreaming. He is a very sensitive young man living apart from the crowd. Betrothed to Beatrice, he has visions of an ondine. These visions haunt him to such an extent that at times he entirely loses a sense of reality. He is under the spell of such a vision when we see Ondine appear. Palemon realizes that Ondine is his only love. She takes him away to her own realm. Her guardian Tirrenio, Lord of all Water-Sprites, scorns Ondine's affection for a mortal. After realizing, however, how sincerely Palemon loves Ondine he unites the lovers with great unearthly pomp and gives an amulet to each. At that moment Palemon is discovered by his friends who are alarmed at his strange behaviour. They take him back to the village. In Act 2 Beatrice joins Palemon in a sea voyage in order to watch over him. Ondine—who can only be seen by Palemon—appears on the waves and enters the boat. Beatrice realizes that Palemon is again under one of his visions.

She sees for the first time that Palemon is wearing a strange amulet. She thinks that it is destined to be given to her, and snatches it away from Palemon. Jokingly she hides it from Palemon holding it overboard. She loses the amulet. While she thinks that the waves have taken it away from her Palemon knows better. He saw Tirrenio grasp the amulet. Tirrenio returns the amulet after Palemon and Ondine fervently beseech him not to be angry, but after Beatrice succeeds in taking the amulet from Palemon a second time Tirrenio takes Ondine away in great anger. Palemon is doomed. He tries to dive after Ondine. The boatmen bind him to the mast. Immediately Tirrenio causes a great storm which destroys the ship. Palemon and Beatrice, however are saved.

In Act 3 we see Palemon and Beatrice preparing for their wedding. Palemon cannot forget Ondine, and has a vision in which he sees

Tirrenio now also take the amulet away from Ondine. The wedding ceremonies only remind Palemon of his marriage to Ondine. When the wedding ceremonies are over the guests leave. Palemon is about to follow Beatrice into their home when there appears a great formation of guests from the world of the ondines. The sprites fall into a wild dance mocking Palemon's disloyalty. Whenever Palemon is close to Ondine she is taken from him. When this contemptuous and weird uproar is over Palemon finds himself left with Ondine. Now he knows that she has become his fate. There is a deadly harmony in her embrace.

It is not the first time that Carter has "psychologized" his ballets (as in *Orpheus*) in order to find a modern approach to old libretti. This might be of great advantage to him as a working hypothesis, but it should not go into the programme notes. People do not want to see the treatment of a pathological case replace a truly and original romantic story. After all, we are much more open to romanticism than we dare to admit. And it is the theatre (where else?) where this world can come alive. We do not want to identify ourselves with a hero who ought to be on a psychiatrist's couch. But nevertheless people were very pleased with Carter's libretto. Carter has done well in eliminating Ashton's stock figures, the distracting "divertissement" and also the all too ticklish problem of a religious wedding on stage.

The Munich production caused a gathering of ballet people from all over Germany and proved to be a major event. I saw Dore Hoyer from Hamburg, Tatjana Gsovsky from Berlin, Marcel Luipart from Essen and Nicolas Beriozoff from Stuttgart. *Undine* was a popular success, especially for Henze, and for Dulce Anaya in the title role.

Gugel's costumes and decors are so right that any criticism would sound ambiguous. He suggests the Mediterranean setting with gigantic ruins of antique and baroque gates and palaces. His colours are lilac, cream, maroon, and a poisonous green (softened up by the lighting). As always his decors seem to have come alive with an unearthly quality, and therefore are part of the dramatic action. In the third act one is never for a moment in doubt that the ballet takes place in Naples—a city where past splendour and present shabbiness unite, just as harmonically as water sprites and mortals in *Undine*.

In contrast to reports from London, Henze's score was not badly received by either audience or dancers. It came as a surprise to hear Henze in discord with the avant-garde, who now seem to regard him as unfaithful. This even caused Henze to write an apology for the Munich programme-note. He complains that the dodecaphonic

MUNICH



DR. WILFRIED HOFMANN

STUTT GART

method lost its original creative liberty, and he denies that he has retreated into conventional areas by stating that nobody positively knows which way will finally prove progressive. The true place for an artist—says Henze—is “in between the stools.” The dancers only disliked certain changes in the rhythms which—of course—puts any dancer at a loss who by reason of lack of musicality has to rely on counting only. Undoubtedly, however, the score asks for a choreographer of superb sensibility and willingness to analyse the music and follow it up in its intricate details. This certainly is Alan Carter's special talent.

Still Carter did not score a full success, but for a three-act ballet this cannot fairly be expected today anyway. Scene I is rather dreary up to the moment when Ondine appears. From then on and through all of Scene II the choreography is inventive, complex and with artistic pas-de-deux (the ballet has eight altogether). For some of the jumps and lifts the Bolshoi's influence is visible. Act II, on the other hand, has not been successfully tackled yet. It is a good idea to have the boat move out into the sea by drawing the decors of quays and houses off stage. But once the boat has floated into the open sea there is no more action to speak of. Since the wind and lightning effects, due to all too old theatre machinery, are unsatisfactory, illusions are minimised and the result is not credible.

It is Act III, which choreographically speaking, may be considered as most satisfactory. Here, as in all mass scenes, Carter shows masterful handling of choreographic counterpoints this way completely dealing with the music. He builds up his wedding ceremonies as if representing authentically some original pagan-christian rites. The turmoil of the last scene is built up so effectively that the whole evening seems to have been successful when the curtain comes down.

Dulce Anaya made her Munich debut as their new lyrical ballerina. Even from the first night she won everybody's heart. Being extremely tiny, of course, she is the most natural “pixie” to think of. When she dances and plays all over the stage with her immense alertness she appears to be someone from a distant world of perfection. Supernatural gifts seem to be inherent in her. Also, mimically she accentuated her role ideally. In Act III—when Palemon is lost to her—she finds time to display her lyricism and at the same time smile coldly and be seductively corrupt. She has studied her role to perfection, and obviously she has inspired Carter to steps which only she can do. I am thinking of her double tours en l'air, and of a breath-taking diagonal of chaînés piqués where every second turn is done as a tour en l'air. Carter has fully exploited her lightness and achieved baffling results! As when in Act III he puts her high up on a black platform where she dances and is carried about by invisible dancers dressed entirely in black. The effect of this swimming and flying is not comparable to ordinary theatre effects.

Franz Baur as Palemon has to go through an extraordinary test of physical fitness. It seems that he has lost a good deal of the tension which he used to possess. The part of Beatrice was to be danced by Trofimova, but due to her illness Inge Bertl and Annette Chappell have been taking over alternately. This role has not a fair chance unless danced by a dancer of personality and great warmth. I prefer Annette Chappell to the more austere interpretation of Inge Bertl. Heino Hallhuber as Tirrenio made a dazzling appearance. His pas de force are of such electrifying dynamics that he seems to be everywhere at the same time, and he surely masters the stage.

It is noteworthy that the Munich première led to a literary discovery of interest to the ballet world. Dr. Friess of the Munich State Opera did an extremely thorough survey through all the “Ondine”-operas, dramas and ballets in history. He discovered that the first ballet *Undine* by A. Gyrowetz was given in Vienna about 1817. Also Dr. Friess dug up the libretto of Paul Taglioni's very first *Ondine*-ballet which he produced in Berlin on October 24 of 1836 to music by H. Schmidt. Here, as later in *Coralia*, Paul Taglioni closely follows de la Motte Fouqué's version. Until now the first ballet about our mermaid had been credited to Jules Perrot. Thus one of the most balletic figures of the great romantic period of ballet has been revived and proven fit to survive. Already the Stuttgart ballet looks forward to staging *Undine* with Frederick Ashton.

“NUTCRACKER” IN STUTT GART

I cannot help associating the *Nutcracker* ballet with an old vehicle that has been sold in portions, and which now, without tyres, rests on an old lot. But I am afraid that even if Madame Preobrajenska were to supervise the original cast in a reproduction it would be proven that the fundamental dilemma of this ballet already clearly showed in the Petipa-version: Is one to do this ballet for children, or for grown-ups?

Berizoff premièred his full production at the Württemberg Staatstheater in Stuttgart on January 9, and—like everyone (last but not least for budget reasons)—tried to do a production that interests all generations. The outcome necessarily must be unsatisfactory and at times dull for everyone. While Berizoff cannot be blamed for a not very strong libretto I must say that he showed a lack of skill in that part of a choreographer's job which asks for a producer's mind, and which would have patched up some of the inherent weaknesses of this ballet. Act One (seen through the eyes of my generation) draws on quite a few truly funny gags and above all on those costumes of the late 19th century which we have come to regard as quite silly today. An excellent job is done by Gerd Praast in his interpretation of Dr. Drosselmeier. For some reason however for the Christmas scene, Berizoff does not use the children of his school, but young dancers of the corps de ballet. While they do their best to pretend to be what they are not, they appear instead to be children who are a little retarded. For this reason, and by the presentation of a Christmas party of a foreign culture, past period, and sociological class unknown today, the children in the audience feel a little bewildered.

In the second scene, on the other hand, Berizoff employs his children as mice, where, as opponents to the soldiers, young dancers would have been more in place. It is fun to see the soldiers—dressed like the footguards of Frederic the Great—parade on pointe and win their battle, but since Clara (Micheline Faure) (in deviation of the libretto) has no part in it, it remains unexplained why later she should be rewarded.

Also, in Act Two the action is not clearly worked out. Clara and her Prince, in spite of Leni Baur-Ecsy's naturalistic stage-effects, do not seem to travel since their voyage remains too much a suite of dances. Here, by the way, we meet a bunch of nicely-dressed snowflakes who here and there seem to be kinswomen of the well known stage family of swans.

The third act should be presented as a real feast of candy, chocolate-bars, whipped cream, popcorn, chewing gum and butter-fingers. This is a problem for the artist assigned to do the decors. In Stuttgart they are light and gay, but we never feel like biting off a single piece of the decor! There is no reason why from here on the children should stay in the performance. The divertissement has the only justification because it is being danced for Clara. Not so in Stuttgart. The Spanish dance starts even before the Royal Couple have taken their places, and during the divertissement the stage gradually empties. It sounds unbelievable, but at the very moment when the grand pas de deux begins the last person has left, and we see a background of empty chairs on stage. Trivial misjudgments like this injure the whole series of dances which ought to be the highlight of the ballet, and which (with the exception of a pitifully empty oriental dance resembling the Petipa-version) shows Berizoff's experience with national dances. If only we would make more use of our contacts with exotic cultures and do away with the old Russian conception of what “Spanish” and “Chinese” really is. For no obvious reason Berizoff has taken apart the pas de deux, which while it is still called “grand” is performed without the variations. These we see as numbers among the national dances!

On the first night the principal roles were danced by Xenia Palley and Donald Barklay. They alternate with Helga Heinrich and Hugo Delavalle while Gisela Erhardt and Ray Barra are the other soloists. As Berizoff's corps de ballet, even after eight performances in the waltz of the flowers, looks under rehearsed, his soloists stand out more. Palley seems to have overcome some physical weakness of the past and gives a very satisfactory performance with neat and quick

—Continued on next page, column 2

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HELEN ROSS

Sunday, February 22nd—B.B.C. Television—Music for You.

Two dance items were included in this programme, the first was a delightful Jota danced with verve and gaiety by Pirmen Trecu and Annette Page. These two dancers seemed ideally matched and this number was quite one of the most enjoyable I have seen for some time on television. The second item was an arrangement from the ballet *Les Patineurs* danced by Anya Linden and Desmond Doyle. The sets for this were most suitable, and having Doyle wear dark tights instead of the usual white was a good idea. Anya Linden looked charming, but her dancing though technically sure, is still very unmusical. The dance arrangements were by Peggy van Praagh and Elsa Brunelleschi. Production by Patricia Foy. The announcement that Desmond Doyle would "accompany" Anya Linden was ludicrous and Mr. Eric Robinson should know better.

Thursday, February 26th—Granada TV—Chelsea at Nine.

Three dancers from the Royal Danish Ballet appeared in an excerpt from the ballet *Miss Julie* by Birgit Culberg. Lizzie Rode, as the cook, is a lovely dancer with beautiful feet and excellent ballon. Erik Bruhn, as the butler, danced superbly, but I thought Kirsten Simone was miscast in the title role. Her dancing was good, but she looks much too unspoiled and sweet a girl to play the part of the neurotic Miss Julie.

One unforgivable thing about this programme was the ridiculous explanation of the story of the ballet. If the story is to be told, why give a completely misleading one?

STUTT GART—Continued from page 23

bourrés and clean and well turned out fouettés. I hated her costume which made her look as if she raised her shoulders, and disapprove of her "Russian" arms if employed at all costs, since this only then impresses one as another mannerism. Barklay is a very reliable and good partner, but he still conveys the impression of how hard partnering really is. This way the audience become too preoccupied with his technique. Ray Barra proves to be an acquisition. His face is well featured for stage purposes, and his body soft and ideally turned out from the hips. At the moment he seems to have a little trouble in controlling the finish of a jump since his plié does not prevent his body from jerking.

At the moment the Stuttgarters are preparing for a production of Fokine's *Petrouchka*, due in May.

From next season Marcel Luipart will be ballet master of the Opera in Cologne (Köln). The first ballet evening will be prepared by Aurelio Milloss.

NEWS: Walter Gore's contract with the Frankfurt Opera has not been renewed.

Alan Carter has resigned his post from the Munich Opera Ballet and will leave at the end of the season.

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PROGRAMMES FOR THE MONTH



Beryl Grey
at Covent Garden



Ludmilla Tcherina
at the Cambridge



Tomanova
at Sadler's Wells

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

25th Mar.	Wed.	(eve)	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Grey, Selling)
26th "	Thurs.	(eve)	<i>Petrushka</i> (Park, Shaw, Clegg) <i>La Valse, Job</i>
28th "	Sat.	(mat)	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Grey, Selling)
28th "	Sat.	(eve)	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
30th "	Mon.	(eve)	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Grey, Selling)
31st "	Tues.	(eve)	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Nerina, Blair)
2nd Apr.	Thurs.	(eve)	<i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> (Grey, Selling)
4th "	Sat.	(mat)	<i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> (Linden, Blair)
6th "	Mon.	(eve)	<i>The Prince of the Pagodas</i> (Beriosova, Blair)
8th "	Wed.	(eve)	<i>The Prince of the Pagodas</i> (Beriosova, Blair)
11th "	Sat.	(mat)	<i>La Fete Etrange, Harlequin in April, The Lady and the Fool</i>
11th "	Sat.	(eve)	<i>La Fete Etrange, Harlequin in April, The Lady and the Fool</i>
13th "	Mon.	(eve)	<i>The Prince of the Pagodas</i> (Beriosova, Blair)
15th "	Wed.	(eve)	<i>Dances Concertantes, La Fete Etrange, Petrushka</i>
16th "	Thurs.	(eve)	<i>The Lady and the Fool, Harlequin in April, Petrushka</i>
21st Apr.	Tues.	(eve)	<i>Firebird, Dances Concertantes, Job</i>
25th "	Sat.	(mat)	<i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
25th "	Sat.	(eve)	<i>Coppelia</i> (Park, Burne) <i>La Valse</i>
27th "	Mon.	(eve)	<i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
30th "	Thurs.	(eve)	<i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> (Nerina, Blair)
2nd May	Sat.	(mat)	<i>Dances Concertantes, Petrushka, Les Patineurs</i>
6th "	Wed.	(eve)	<i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> (Seymour, MacLeary)

BALLET RAMBERT

W/c 30th March	<i>Theatre Royal, Exeter</i>
" 6th April	<i>Theatre Royal, Bath</i>
" 13th "	<i>Opera House, Chettenham</i>
" 20th "	<i>Opera House, Jersey</i>
" 27th "	<i>The White Rock Pavilion, Hastings</i>
Comm. 25th May	two weeks' season at Sadler's Wells Theatre, London
W/c 8th June	<i>Essoldo Theatre, Brighton</i>

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Destino, Eternal Love, Florinda and Angelino.

W/c 20th April Theme and Variation, *Nutcracker Suite* (excerpts),
Gamayoun (Russian Legend), *The Warrior,*
Death of a Torero, Grand pas Tzigane.

W/c 27th April *L'Epoque Romantique, Le Chevalier et la*
Princesse, Romeo and Juliet (excerpts), *Faith*
and Strength, Mazurka, Grand Pas Hongroise,
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The Young Dancer's Page

TWO things stood out in the trials for the Mabel Ryan Award of the Cecchetti Society, held this year at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre on 7th February. One was the satisfying rise in the general level of attainment: in contrast to previous years, there were only a few competitors whose technique was so inadequate as to make puzzling the decision of the teacher to enter them. The other was the disconcerting effect of the very unusual choreography for the set dances by Cleo Nordi: with commendable enterprise, the organisers went to a distinguished teacher of the Russian school for the set dances this year.

In the junior section (under 13 years) Lynn Wallis (a pupil of Irene Kinsey) stood out as soon as she came on the stage, before she made a single dance-movement. Everything about her suggested a combination of natural talent, good physique and good teaching: there was no mistaking the proud and easy carriage of the head, the shoulders pulled down and back, the rib-cage lifted out of the waist and the fine straight greyhound-look of the legs. The heart-shaped face, too, had exactly the indescribable look of the classical ballerina: I found it quite impossible to believe that I was looking at a child of twelve. Then the class began, and Lynn Wallis fully lived up to the expectations aroused by her appearance in repose: she showed excellent line, good balance, grace, fluidity and all the qualities one demands in a soloist. Some other competitors showed talent, but she was head-and-shoulders above them.

Things were very different in the trials for the set dance. This proved extremely difficult for the children, technically and above all musically. Madame Nordi had in fact chosen a piece of baroque music, a courante by Handel, with a highly sophisticated contrapuntal structure. (A courante is of course a dance, but counterpoint of this type is very strange to young dancers of today). Because of the musical complexity, most of the competitors were unable to phrase their dancing in such a way that it made any sort of sense, and at first I could myself make nothing of the choreography. But then Janice Wright (pupil of Diana Barker) and Susan Poulton (pupil of Rita Emmerson) showed that it was possible to put together the steps in such a way that they fitted the music, though the relationship between the two was so complex that I was staggered by their achievement, and above all by that of their teachers (who interpreted the written indications of the dance steps with imagination and intelligence).

Under the circumstances the adjudicator, Margaret Dale, was faced with an impossible task. In fact she gave the junior award to Hazel Fountain (another pupil of Irene Kinsey), who did moderately well in both the class and the dance, and showed a neat pair of feet; but to my mind no really fair choice was possible. In Miss Dale's shoes I should have selected about six of the competitors who did best in

either the class or the set dance, and sent them to Madame Nordi for production before making a decision.

In the senior section Madame Nordi's choreography presented the competitors with equally severe problems. Here the music was romantic—Schumann's *Papillons*—and Madame Nordi arranged a dance which followed the sudden shifts in tempo and phrasing in such a way that the steps made great demands on the strength and stamina of the children as well as on their musicality and the interpretative ability of their teachers. But there were two young dancers, Amanda Knott and Ann Whitley (both pupils of Nesta Brooking) who showed both the strength and the musicality needed for the dance, and were of course very well produced by Nesta Brooking (who, in addition to being a great teacher, is also a distinguished choreographer).

Madame Rambert, who adjudicated the senior section, has a whim of iron—and was at her most whimsical on this occasion. She had difficulty in seeing the numbers on the competitors from her seat in the gallery (even though these were quite large) and made some very witty comments on this in her exchanges with Peggy van Praagh (who took the competitors through an admirably balanced and revealing class). When Peggy van Praagh explained that No. 15 was missing, Madame Rambert quipped back, instantaneously, "That's the one I can see best," and convulsed the audience. But she was most whimsical of all in selecting Penelope Thomas as the winner: in line, rhythm and facial expression this dancer showed a number of faults, and her most striking quality—grace of movement—was too languid and deliquescent to make the best of the steps.

In both the junior and senior set dances the teachers interpreted the written indications of the enchaînements in ways which differed very widely indeed. This was particularly true of the small *emboîtés en tournant* towards the end of the senior dance, but it applied more or less to the whole of both dances; and some of the stage patterns one saw were most peculiar.

The unusual and exacting quality of Cleo Nordi's choreography made very obvious the necessity of dance notation for sending a dance by post. Merely to list the names of the steps is quite inadequate, unless the dance is completely routine in character—and such a dance would provide a poor test for the competitors. In fact a quiet revolution is now under way in the British ballet world, owing to the fact that both the Royal Ballet School and the R.A.D. Teachers' Training Course provide training in Benesh Dance Notation. In due course notation will inevitably become a normal part of the dancer's equipment, and I think the Cecchetti Society would do well to consider the advantages of sharing in this process of development.

FERNAU HALL

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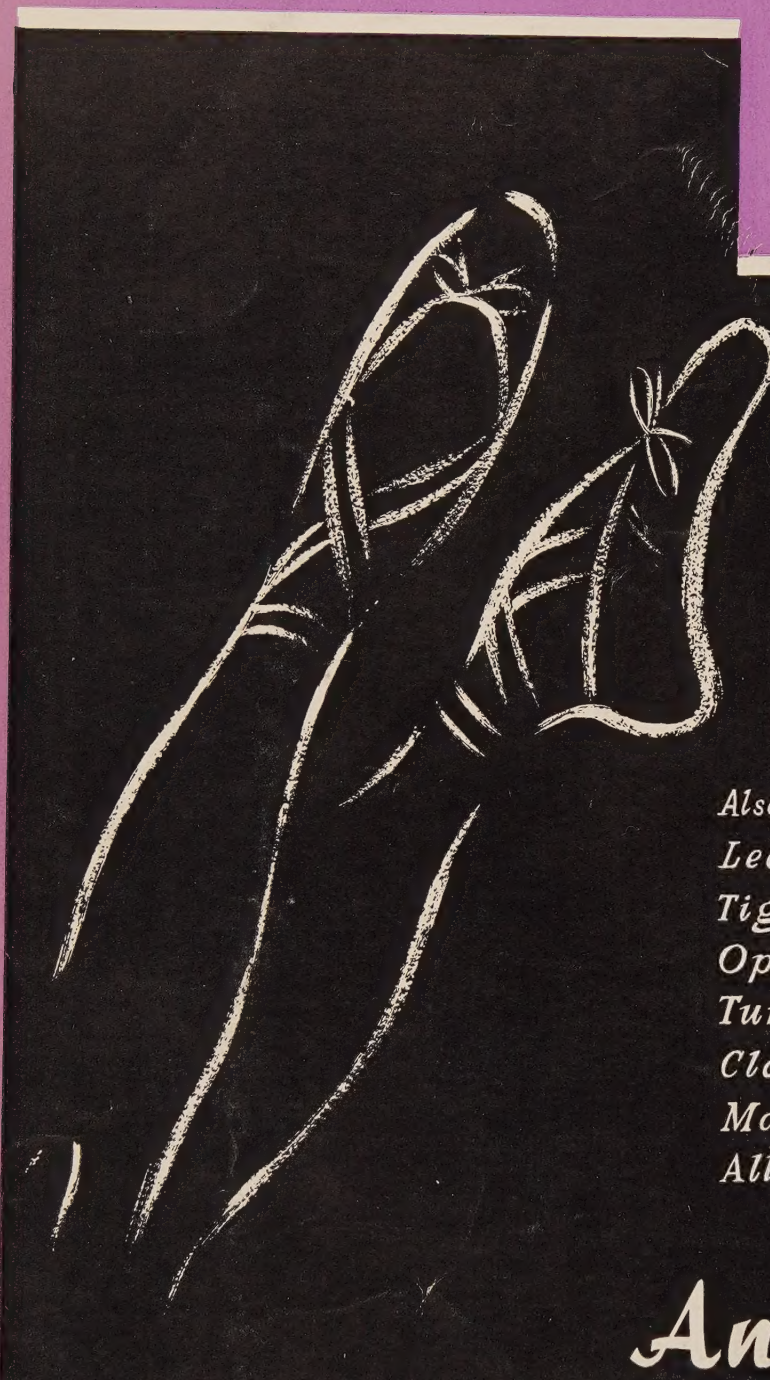
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